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THE STORY OF
HOW WE
WON THE VOTE



Christabel Pankhurst

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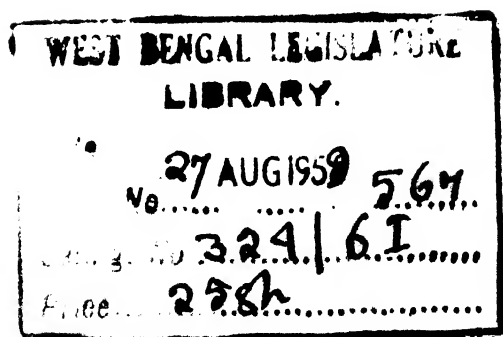
THE STORY OF HOW WE WON THE VOTE,

Dame Christabel Pankhurst

Edited by the Right Honourable

LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE

of Peaslake



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Preface

The status of women in human society has fluctuated strikingly during world history. Ancient books tell of Goddesses and Amazons, but the halcyon days of Rome were based on complete male supremacy. Shakespeare's heroines were free women who held their heads high and behaved, according to later standards, in a 'most unladylike' manner. But by the eighteen fifties nearly all the personal rights of women had been whittled away and politically they were regarded as second-class citizens. John Stuart Mill was not exaggerating when he wrote of 'The Subjection of Women'.

Of course some individual women had protested, but they were ridiculed as freaks and ignored. It was not until well into the second half of the nineteenth century that concerted action was taken on behalf of their sex by a number of British women of standing and character. To this movement a few exceptional men gave their support, and after immense initial difficulties real progress was made. Specific reforms were carried restoring old rights and conferring new ones. Real equality in law between the sexes seemed just round the corner.

But one essential right had still to be conceded—the right of women to choose, alongside of men, the persons who should represent them in the House of Commons—in a word, the Parliamentary Franchise. Even this key reform seemed well within reach by patient and persistent advocacy. Already several back-bench M.P.s, either from conviction or to 'please the ladies', had expressed themselves as favourable to women having the vote. And so it might well have been but for one fact. That fact was Mr. Gladstone. This eminent Liberal statesman, champion of democracy and progress, the respected leader of the Party which inscribed on its banner the slogan 'No taxation without representation', would have none of it.

This was a stunning blow. For, so long as he was in power, no major constitutional change had the slightest chance of being carried into law against his implacable opposition. But the gallant suffrage veterans carried on their campaign, pleading with convincing eloquence.

Nevertheless the public lost interest. The newspapers ignored the question. Politicians put it out of their thoughts. A Conservative Government came into power which 'cared for none of these things'. The Boer War intervened, shutting out consideration of domestic issues.

Then suddenly, with a general election in the offing, a new figure appeared on the scene. It was Youth knocking at the door! Intrepid, impetuous, arrogant Youth demanding of eminent statesmen justice for women! Two young girls not long out of their teens, with no money and no influence, challenging the whole might of an immensely popular incoming Government. Could anyone imagine any but one issue of this ridiculously unequal contest?

And yet history records that in the end victory did not rest with the big battalions. The cause for which the two girls made their protest was triumphantly successful. The Party which resisted them, the Party which had been up till then the champion of democracy and the pioneer of human freedom, is now but the shadow of its former greatness.

This book is the personal narrative of the epic struggle told by Christabel Pankhurst, the elder of the two girls. In it she unfolds with remorseless objectivity the successive events of the ten years' campaign in which she and her mother played so predominant a part. But it is also an intensely human document which reveals to the discriminating reader what manner of woman she was and how it came about that she had such an astonishing influence on the men and women of her day.

In her prime Christabel had a political flair which was a match for the most subtle male minds, even for that of the 'Wizard of Wales', the redoubtable David Lloyd George. She had a passion to free women from the stigma of inferiority and saw clearly that the essential prerequisite was the Parliamentary vote. She had a genius for leadership which inspired her followers to acts of unbelievable courage. She understood in a high degree the importance of publicity and had an uncanny instinct for evoking it.

The strategy of her campaign was based on certain fundamental concepts. She knew that 'deeds speak louder than words'. Words could be forgotten or overcome by other words. Deeds were incontrovertible and immortal. Words could be used to explain deeds but not as a substitute for them. That was the basis of the suffragette unconstitutional activity which proceeded from acts of symbolic illegality

in the beginning to open rebellion at the end of the campaign.

She also understood that in politics as in war it is not the rank and file but the leader that is the enemy. Therefore she went for the Government and not for the back-bench M.P. There was nothing unconstitutional about this but it brought her into conflict with the leaders of other suffrage societies.

When Christabel died in California in the early spring of 1958 she left no instructions about any book she had written dealing with the suffrage campaign. But her Executrix, Miss Grace Roe, had a suspicion that some such MS. might be found among her effects. However, after going through all her papers in her apartment in Los Angeles, nothing was found. Miss Roe then remembered that a mutual friend had a number of boxes that once belonged to Christabel and she obtained permission to take them away and search them. To her surprise and joy on opening one of them she came across, among a quantity of valueless material, the typescript of the present book. It had apparently been written about twenty years previously, and it was to be presumed from collateral letters that Christabel intended that it should not be published until after her death.

Grace Roe brought the book with her to England and asked me to edit it and see it through the Press, urging me to accept the task on the ground of the intimate association of my wife (Emmeline) and myself with Christabel for the greater part of the militant campaign. After some hesitation, reassured by the high quality of the material and recalling the warm esteem which I felt for the author, I accepted Grace's invitation.

Christabel herself had not selected any title for her book. But I found that she had revised the typescript with much care so that the text could be sent to the publishers unaltered. Accordingly, except for a slightly new subdivision of chapters and the omission of a few paragraphs that seemed repetitive the book is reproduced exactly as she wrote it. It is public knowledge that in 1912 the connection of my wife and myself with Christabel and her mother and the W.S.P.U. was unhappily severed owing to a disagreement on policy. Christabel deals with this quite frankly and I see no occasion to comment on what she has written. I have added a short postscript at the end of the book to complete the story of the fight for the vote.

No one reading the pages of this book, least of all the editor, can do so without a feeling of intense admiration for the courage and devotion shown by those who made heavy sacrifices for the cause. Health and freedom were given up, social ostracism was incurred. Each in his or her own way gave of their best—men and women, militants and constitutionalists. Some only of these have their names recorded here. Many more will have no written memorial. But they too were faithful in their testimony, and their lives are woven into the fabric of human civilization.

PETHICK-LAWRENCE

I

Family History

Mrs. Pankhurst's early years and marriage

MOTHER'S earliest years were spent in the North of England. Nothing could have been more bracing and more educative for the career that was to be hers. Life, in the North, is seen in all its logic. Nature there is sterner; existence is less aesthetic than in the South, but there are great compensations. A southern gardener values seeds and plants from a northern nursery, and, on the same principle, a north-country childhood makes for a certain tenacity in face of obstacles and in resistance to counter-attractive side issues. Her 'Manchester rigidity'—as a critic called it, in his despair of inducing her to compromise in the height of her Suffrage campaign—was one of the factors of Mother's ultimate triumph.

A great Londoner she was too! 'London where everybody wants to be' was her word. As a child, 'to go to London' was her dream. It was her lot, as the leader of a great movement, to come, see and conquer there.

The industrial North is an effectual school of politics and economics, and Mother fully learnt its lessons. The seamy side of industrialism, and the manifold need of reform, appear there in reality. Smoke-darkened skies, a mixture of smoke and air to breathe, the blotting out of Nature's green life, colourless streets, mean and even insanitary housing, mechanical noise, the monotonous yet precarious toil of wage-earners, the premature tearing from school and play of children, the anxious life of mothers, too scantily fed to bear strong babies, too poor to feed them properly as they grew—these and other plagues were rampant in Lancashire when Mother's days began.

Her own lot was fortunate enough. Her father, Robert Goulden, the owner of a calico-printing and bleach works, who had ascended the business ladder from the office to the employer's sanctum, had bought

a big house on the outskirts of Manchester, and in its large and lovely garden and wide meadows Mother and her nine younger brothers and sisters enjoyed the delights of the country. Yet she was near enough to the other and poorer half of the world to know how it lived—to gain an understanding of wrong social conditions and the hardships of the working masses that prepared her for the work of her later life.

Education for women was not, in Mother's girlhood, so readily available as now. Yet they learnt well according to their opportunity and they could, if they would, do much reading if books were to hand, as in Mother's home they were. Her father had his well-stocked library and belonged to the library of the Athenaeum, where also lectures were to be heard. He and his friends discussed in youthful hearing the vital issues of the day—politics, economics, home and foreign affairs. He loved the arts too. Shakespeare was his by heart, and his strong dramatic gift he exercised as an amateur actor in Shakespeare's plays. Mother's lively intelligence did not, therefore, lack training in this home university, apart from careful drilling in the 'three R's', with French, history, geography, grammar, and so on, at the 'ladies school' nearby.

Grandmother, born in the Isle of Man, gave Mother her sea-blue eyes, her healthy, finely balanced constitution, her spirited courage, her portion of the enterprise that scatters Manx folk far in the world and gives them good success in their undertakings. The peaceful, open-air life was the best preparation for the exacting and energy-spending life in store for her.

Mother's later education was in France. Her father went often, on business, to Paris. One day, he took with him his eldest daughter Emmeline and put her to school there. Contact with the lucid and logical French mind was another deep influence in her life. The use of the French language, marvellous both as an instrument of thought and as a training to think, was educational good-fortune. On another plane, but not without its importance, her taste in dress, which always served her so well, was developed, if not acquired, in those Paris schooldays. The historic significance of Paris was not lost upon her. Her birth, on the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, gave her, as a child, a personal interest in the Revolution. But she was stirred by nearer happenings, for the Franco-Prussian War, with its attendant disturbance of French national life, was not long past, and this gave the English girl a sense of living in historic times, and opened up vistas that were invisible in that quiet life in the north of our island.

Without necessarily applauding all the political elements in France, Mother deeply loved the French people. In the years to come, the French heroine, Joan of Arc, was to be the example held before Mother's Suffrage hosts. Those who really want to know what Mother was like, in form and spirit, should go to the Place St. Augustin in Paris and look at the Joan of Arc statue there. It is exactly Mother!

Schooldays ended, Mother went home to take her place as the eldest sister in the family of ten boys and girls. A many-sided being and highly charged with energy, her activities were numerous. She was interested in politics in general and woman suffrage in particular.

She plunged into dressing her sisters, into redecorating the drawing-room, into mothering her baby sister. She took her part with a not unmusical family. Her singing voice had something of the quality that made her speaking voice so potent with great audiences, even to the last of her days. She had, in her young days, as always, a power of swift extraction of the essence of a matter. She was feminine to a degree in her ability to 'jump', as it is called, to a conclusion. Her young days were not those of games and much exercise, but she grew up straight as a lance and remained so throughout her life, retaining, with a certain frailty of look, remarkable health and youthfulness of body. In any emergency requiring physical courage, she was always to the fore. To put out a fire by tearing down burning window curtains was nothing to her, and one could not even imagine a crisis in which she would be at a loss. The defect of the sum of her qualities was that she preferred to do everything herself and it was by a real and self-denying effort that she would entrust a task to any hand but her own. This might not tend to the development of other people's initiative. But the proof that Mother did effectively subdue her desire to 'do it all' is seen in the host of women who enlisted in her suffrage army, and there developed power to achieve, of which they had not suspected themselves capable! She kindled others; she lit their flame from her own.

Mother's after-school life went quietly on in the big countryfied house on the edge of the city. The political talk of her father and his friends, and now and again a woman suffrage meeting, were then the main food for her interest in public affairs. The round of home life was delightfully interrupted by another prolonged stay in Paris. When her sister Mary went in her turn to the school in Paris, Mother went too. As a 'parlour boarder' she was free to spend much time with her school friend Noémie Rochefort, who was now the wife of the Swiss painter

Frédéric Dufaux. Noémie, as the daughter of the celebrated Henri Rochefort, could give her English friend an entrance to the literary and political circles of Paris, and introduce her to many of the interesting personalities of the day. These included, very notably, Madame Edmond Adam, the beautiful and gifted woman who had played, directly and through her influence, a vital part in French politics. When I myself, years afterwards, came to know Madame Adam, then an octogenarian, she was still all fire and mental vigour, well meriting to be called the grand old lady of France. Deep indeed must have been the impression she made on Mother in earlier days. This whole excursion into the intellectual life of Paris was one of the great experiences of Mother's youth. Her beauty, her Englishness and simplicity, made her very attractive; her quickness of sympathy and her fluent, pretty French enabled her to fit into this Paris world, and she more than half longed to stay there always. Her friend Noémie wished it, too, and set herself to Anglo-French matchmaking. They would be close neighbours, their children would make one family. Each would have her salon. They would queen it in the centre of Europe's thought and action. It was a great dream and Noémie was busy in making it come true. Reality depended upon Grandfather, away in Manchester. Paternal consent and a *dot* were essential to this ripening marriage project. He would give neither. He did not approve of a foreigner for a husband or of *dots*, or of living abroad, and he took his daughter straight home to the nest.

At the time she must have thought her way narrowed. But her active temperament would not let her mope in Manchester and, after all, her heart had not been engaged. Only one ever won and held it—my father. It was simply a wider life she had wanted and always would want.

Her ardent nature moved her to desire to do some great thing, and yet little seemed possible in those times for a woman. But with what zeal did the girls of that time use every small advantage open to them! Their example has lessons still for the more outwardly free and favoured woman of today.

The riddle of Mother's future was not to be long unsolved. Her mother and all the children had gone away to their other home at the seaside, when the illness of the housekeeper demanded the return of

Emmeline to keep house for her father. During those quiet weeks in the summer garden, without too-much-interested brothers and sisters about, her future was decided.

She had already known and gratefully admired Dr. Pankhurst as a man of great gifts and learning, who, in company with his seniors, John Stuart Mill and Jacob Bright, M.P., the brother of John Bright, were pioneers in the support of women's political enfranchisement. Richard Marsden Pankhurst—'the Doctor' as all Manchester affectionately knew him—was twenty years older than Mother and had been in public life since very early manhood. Even in those days, when personality seemed to flourish more than it does now, Dr. Pankhurst's personality was remarkable and outstanding. His intellectual powers were remarkable also, his learning was encyclopaedic, and masterly was his use of it. He had, added to all this, a sympathetic quality and essence of leadership, which put him *en rapport* with individuals of all classes and with the great public. In his chosen profession, the law, his profound legal learning, his prodigious industry, his appreciation of the force of an argument and his personal appeal gave him a great position.

The same gifts and virtues marked him in political life. Nothing stood between him and professional and political fame, but his attachment to 'struggling causes' and his pioneering instinct which moved him always in advance of his time. His championship of votes for women was the first handicap he put upon himself. He was a Liberal in politics, and Mr. Gladstone was then Liberal leader and dispenser of favour to brilliant young men. The Liberal Party was always on the look-out for such as Richard Marsden Pankhurst—the happy possessor of a brilliant mind and the magnetic appeal that wins the masses and makes the leader of men. The great Gladstone saw and heard this gifted young man and Dr. Pankhurst got his chance. He used it to plead in the presence of the Liberal leader for the political enfranchisement of women—a measure to which Mr. Gladstone was most bitterly opposed and which he had forbidden his Front Bench colleagues to support.

Gone were young Pankhurst's prospects of political fame, so far as these could be made or marred by the leader of the Liberal Party!

Pankhurst is a Kentish name, and Father's family migrated from Kent to Lancashire two generations before his own. In childhood, I

heard of a family tree going back to de Pencestre and the Normans, and Father had unquestionable pride of race. But Mother was not interested in the bygone, and both were very much of Robert Burns' opinion, that 'a man's a man for a' that'.

Father's brother was to us a legendary 'Uncle John in America' whither he had adventured in his young manhood. His sisters were Aunt Bess, loyal, affectionate and extremely firm, and Aunt Harriette, so noble and lovable that Mother, after her marriage, would have liked her to spend her remaining days, which as it proved were not to be many, under her roof. Aunt Harriette, as Father's much elder sister, had been his guide and confidante, rejoicing in his success at school, at Owen's College (Victoria University) and London University, of which he became Doctor of Laws and gold medallist. Oxford was his desire, but by that time he had left the Church of England to become a Nonconformist and this then debarred him from Oxford.

The social problem was acute in the Industrial England of Father's younger days. The Reform Act of 1870 had not then borne its fruit of popular education and increasing heed of working-class interests. Father was all on the side of the unconsidered millions who, if they gained something, also suffered much under the earlier industrialism. So long ago as his first campaign as a Parliamentary candidate, he anticipated the modern movement towards collaboration in industry.

The cause of International Peace was also among his foremost preoccupations and he took an active share in the Peace societies and Congresses of those days. He was no Little Englander! Even we children were made to feel this, for he enjoined upon us a sound respect for the British power and place in the world. His political extremism, as it was then regarded, centred in his ardent championship of the working classes. His confidence in democracy was complete and characteristic of his day and generation.

From his very young days, to the end, he laboured with an intense local patriotism, not always found in men of his wider interests, for Manchester's good. In the woman's cause he was a pioneer. He it was who drafted the two successive Married Women's Property Acts and largely provided the zeal and driving force that kept these measures to the fore and got them through.

Dr. Pankhurst it was, again, who, with Lord Coleridge, argued the case of the women who claimed to be 'persons' within the meaning of the Reform Act of 1867 and to have the right to vote in Parliamentary

elections. He it was who drafted the woman suffrage Bill to redress the injustice done by the judicial decision that women were not 'persons' for the purpose of voting. The Bill, which was introduced into Parliament in 1870 and carried through its second reading, was blocked by Mr. Gladstone.

Father had resolved to remain unmarried for the sake of his public work. He held to his resolve until, at forty years old, he fell in love with Mother. He found in her the woman who shared all his own thought and feeling about life, a helpmeet as idealistic and self-regardless as he was. They were made for one another.

Mother was no revolutionary in her views of marriage. She wished to try no new experiments. On the wedding eve, as they parted in happy anticipation of the morrow, it was to hear him tell her again how unendingly he loved her and should ever love her. He seemed to her so wise and wonderful in comparison with her own youth and smaller knowledge. 'Are you sure you will always love me and want me for ever?' she said. 'Wouldn't you have liked to try first how we should get on?' It is easy to imagine how tenderly he smiled and how completely he satisfied her wish to hear him say, yet once again, all that the morrow's marriage meant and always would mean to him.

I have all his letters written during their acquaintance and short engagement. The first dated 8th September begins:

Dear Miss Goulden,

There is, as you know, now in action an important movement for the higher education of women. As one of the party of progress, you must be interested in this. I have much considered the subject and sought to frame a scheme for making such education as real and efficient as possible. . . .

By 23rd September it is:

Dearest Treasure,

I received with greatest joy your charming likeness (sent with too few words). The Carte itself has honestly tried to express you as you are, but of course it could not. The fire and soul of the original can never consent to enter a copy. Still, when the original is absent, the copy consoles and animates.

Theirs was never a self-absorbing love:

In all my happiness with you [he wrote], I feel most deeply the responsibilities that are gathering round us. . . . Every struggling cause shall be ours. . . . So living, we even in the present enter, as it were, by inspiration into the good time yet far away and something of its morning glow touches our foreheads, or ever it is, by the many, even so much as dreamt of.

Looking to the social service they might render together, he wrote:

Help me in this in the future, unceasingly. Herein is the strength—with bliss added—of two lives made one by that love which seeks more the other than self. How I long and yearn to have all this shared to the full between us in equal measure! . . .

A shadow falls on their happiness. Father's mother is ill, and dies. The quiet wedding was hastened because of his loneliness and sorrow. Mother naturally would have liked, as do other young brides, the ceremonial and festivity usually belonging to such a day. She would have looked lovely in full bridal array, her dark hair, blue eyes, clear, slightly olive skin with the little flush that came in moments of emotion. Four pretty younger sisters, from babyhood upward, would have made half her bridal retinue. But the lonely one could not be kept waiting.

'It is only a few brief hours,' he wrote, 'that separate us from that oneness of life which ought, which will, hold for us an existence of joyous love.'

The Years of Preparation

*Politics—Children—Shopkeeping—The First Sorrow—
Back to Manchester—Widowhood* •

MOTHER'S career began with her marriage. This admitted her to a share in the political activities of her husband and so exercised and developed her own innate powers.

Father's people and his many friends, more ambitious for him than he was for himself, had hoped that this young and beautiful wife, with her magnetism and charm, would cause him to steer a new and worldly wiser course towards the legal and political heights they foresaw for him. Mother was, however, determined not to be a hindrance to his political freedom of thought and action. Besides, she was as much of an idealist as he!

Her ambition for him was that he should do great things for the people, to deliver them from poverty and bad housing and overwork, and that he should work for the cause of international peace. She would not have his wings, as reformer and champion of great causes, clipped or weighted by her—indeed she desired him to soar higher than ever. She was oversensitive lest his marriage to her be a weight upon him. The economic independence of married women was then a great matter with the woman suffragists. Many of them were married to prosperous men or were interested in the case of those who were. The new industrial aristocracy were not given to marriage settlements and dowries, as were the landed aristocracy, and the law relating even to a wife's own property was not yet finally amended. A rich man's wife could be made to feel gallingly dependent.

Mother had hoped and thought she would be dowered by her father. When this did not materialize, she was greatly disappointed, as she had wanted in everything to take her part in furthering the great reforming mission in which she was now partner with her husband.

Those were not days when a barrister could, with professional impunity, declare advanced political opinions. Mother, in her youthful enthusiasm, was spurring Father on in his political course, urging him to challenge the social and economic dragons in the people's path. Nowadays extreme Socialists can make fortunes at the Bar; the extremity of their views merely lends piquancy to their professional exploits and in no way detracts from their prosperity. But in Father's day it was not so. Bang went briefs every time he made a political move. His championship of woman suffrage was the action that counted most against him, especially when he began it, in the 1860s. The cause was ridiculed then, as indeed it was, even if in decreased measure, until women's militancy struck the smile from the face of the scoffers. In his attitude towards the cause of women and of the working class, Father was long before his time and paid the penalty. Mother, seeing this, longed passionately to be able to bear a share in the financial sense. She wanted her husband in Parliament, where she believed he could do great things for the working masses. She cherished a project of one day, by her own effort, setting him free to devote himself wholly to public work.

Her thoughts were, of course, not all of politics. She had all the happiness and interest of her new life to occupy her. She had her children. Pretty names were indispensable for girls, Father maintained. Christabel he chose for his first child, suggested by Coleridge's poem, 'the lovely lady Christabel whom her father loves so well'. For Sylvia he used to make a play on the Latin words it suggested and call her Miss Woody Way. Adela was the third daughter and fourth child. His son and third child was Francis Henry—'Frank'.

Father's first election campaign—as an Independent Liberal—was for undivided Manchester, before the passage of the Corrupt Practices Act, which limited election expenses and forbade canvassing for pay. This handicap upon an independent candidature was fatal in such a vast constituency. Moreover, as an independent candidate he lacked party machinery for the campaign.

Father's next fight was in London at Rotherhithe. There the Irish vote defeated him, for it was cast against all Liberal candidates, at that election, in order to force the Liberal leaders to grant Home Rule for Ireland.

Mother, now rather more free of maternal cares, entered into the

Rotherhithe campaign. Even before he was able to begin his campaign, she was in the field.

Father would have been better advised to try a Northern constituency, but Mother, perhaps, was reckoning that she could more easily play the candidate's wife, and later the Member's wife, if Father's constituency could be within hail of the House of Commons. A seat in Parliament was her first wish for him, that he might take the place in national affairs that she thought his due.

He was beaten at Rotherhithe. The House of Commons was never to know his presence—yet no man has ever more powerfully influenced its action, for his wife was the first to acknowledge the strength she drew from his political instruction and example.

They decided to migrate to London, where Father's profession and politics were taking him increasingly. Mother had a great plan of her own to fulfil in London. Father would say, half whimsically, that he wished he were an East India tea merchant or something which would not mean conflict between purse and politics.

This talk must have given Mother her plan. Amateur shopkeeping must have been a fashion just then. It sounded such a good idea. You bought lovely silks, pottery, lampshades and the like for so much, and you sold them for so much more and there you had a useful profit! The difference between profit gross and profit net and the hard facts of overhead expenses were attractively veiled in the rosy clouds of hope. Mother, in her young hopefulness, saw nothing but the profit she would make. All that earnestness, that force of will which, in later days, developed, disciplined, directed to a lofty objective, won votes for women, were, in her inexperience, concentrated upon the shop she would start in that great London. In Manchester it would then have been indiscreet for a barrister's wife to do such a thing. But in London it would be different. With a shop she would lay the financial foundation of a great movement of social and industrial reform and, of course, the enfranchisement of women. She could think of nothing more propitious, for women were not trained to careers in those days, and if they had been, there were so few careers to be trained for!

She went to London, to find the shop and to get her stock. Rents gave her the first shock. Her mother must have dealt with Shoolbred's, the great store now no more, but once a household word. She gravitated to the Shoolbred region and took not far away, in what she deemed a situation of great business promise, a shop and its

surmounting floors. It was most impracticable and rather like a story book, but she was all confidence and enthusiasm. She went then to choose her stock—a thrilling task. Her venture, 'Emerson & Co.', was launched. She moved in a radiant daydream.

At last came the great removal. . . . Father and Mother and four children and Susan, our nurse.

Mother plunged into the new interests of business, but not to the exclusion of woman suffrage and other political activities.

On her marriage she had been invited to join Father on the Manchester Committee for Woman Suffrage of which Lydia Becker was a moving spirit. Miss Becker's gift of strategy was remarkable, and if the woman's vote could have been peaceably gained, her statecraft would have won it. But to get the vote, without having the vote, was impossible by peaceful persuasion. To get the vote you had to *have* the vote or find some substitute enabling you to compel those who would deny you the vote to yield.

Mother was happy in London. The realization of her aim for Father and of their joint career seemed one step nearer. There were new friendships, new interests, new tasks. We children entered more and more, as time went on, into the spirit of it all.

Mother's sister Mary, her great ally in all those years, had joined her in the new home. A very important person was this beloved Aunt Mary, deputy-mothering us, whenever needful, sharing our parents' aspirations and ideals. In the later strenuous times that led to the final Suffrage victory, Aunt Mary, gentle and selfless as ever, yet brave as a lion—and wonderfully eloquent too—was by Mother's side, until her life of devotion suddenly ended, a day after her release from political imprisonment.

As time went on Aunt Ada, too, used to appear for fleeting visits, on her way to foreign lands. She had her own career—a greater rarity in those days than now. Her sunshiny personality made each of her visits an event to us. Father went back and forth, for his cases *would* be in Manchester, just when we had come to London. He was lonely often, but hopeful always, saying in his letters: 'We ought to feel that we are going through a preparing trial. So much is going on, in which we ought to have a part.' Another letter: 'The time will come when more earnestness in politics will be vital to the State.'

Mother felt a pang of doubt as to her great shopkeeping plan's success. He reassured her: 'Do not be anxious, no fears—only calm and still peace and hope with white wings.' His philosophy of political life is here: 'For nearly thirty years, day in, day out, in agonies and waiting, I have held to two principles—keep down private interests; work for great public ends.'

The new, changed world was the goal. Mother herself was ever urging him on to unworldly and unprofitable political doings. His admiring love for her was always growing: 'You know how I love you and want to cherish your life. How splendid you were on Saturday—in all that unconscious loveliness! Dear heart, I hold you to mine!' Thus he writes to her after nine years of marriage.

Then a blow falls. Frank was ill. He had croup, so we children were told, and so it was thought, but it was really diphtheria. Mother had gone to Manchester to be with Father, who was acting in a big inquiry. She rushed home. Our doctor was away. Frank quickly got worse. Mother, Aunt Mary and Susan looked afraid and we caught their fear. Father couldn't leave the inquiry. He was in agony about Frank. Two strange doctors saw him. Then our own doctor came. Eight-year-old I stood alone on the stairs, hoping he would bring a cure. The tall man came alone out of the room, kind and sad. Someone very little, but very great, was going out of the world. If he could have done anything, he had come too late. Mother's child was gone, and such a child! He had in him the best of both parents. He would have been a remarkable man. It was her first acquaintance with death. Father got the news in the midst of his case and could not get free till it ended. Fatherhood that begins in ripe years is doubly serious and Frank was his heart's core. The grief remained with him always and seemed to give him new tenderness for the children that remained. Frank's death was the first and the one real sorrow that came to Father and Mother in their years of marriage.

Inquiry found defective drains and we were hurried to Richmond, while house-hunting resulted in removal to Russell Square, to a house at the corner where the hotel now stands. Mother, with business hopes that nothing would daunt and that were now reviving, removed her shop to a more propitious address in Berners Street.

Mother's business efforts were all part of the experience that

prepared her for the historic campaign of her later years. That continued struggle, the cares she brought upon herself and then faced so gallantly in this attempt to make money for public service, were all a discipline and a training.

In point of fact, we should have been far better off without the business, which was a constant drain upon Father's income. This, added to all he spent on public appeals and movements and the perpetual good turns he was doing to other people, really created what Mother was trying to cure. Yet she went on, and he sustained her, in earnest devotion and as part of her contribution to the common cause. Politics at the same time held much of her attention—perhaps too much for the good of the business.

The youngest child, a boy, was born in the new house. To his parents it seemed almost as though the one who had gone had been given back to them. They called this second son by the names, in different order, of their first son. This new baby, a fine, strong child, nearly cost Mother her life. She was doing well, it seemed; then severe haemorrhage set in. Again her own doctor, not the same one, was out of reach, Mother was dying. We children were herded beyond hearing to the basement kitchen. Aunt Mary came down, pale with dread, to be assailed with questions about a possibly ailing pet. Meantime, our faithful nurse, Susan, was running through the streets, with cap-strings flying, to find any doctor who could come in time. Telephones were not handy then and she did not think of a cab. There were doctors nearby, but it was not their patient—they must not interfere. However, by the passion of her cry: 'My mistress is dying,' she tore one from his breakfast table and saved Mother's life. To this day I draw breaths of relief—of thankfulness—that she was spared to us then.

Politics interested us and we children were playing election games at an early age. The oldest of us were now and again allowed, to our pleasure, to attend meetings, especially when these took place at home. The big double drawing-room housed a considerable company, and meetings and conferences would be held there on peace and arbitration, industrial and social questions and, of course, on woman suffrage.

One visitor and speaker at these meetings was Mr. Hodgson Pratt, a great friend of Father's, a notable worker for international peace, whose portrait hangs beside Mother's in the National Portrait Gallery.

A supporter of woman suffrage, Mr. R. B. Haldane, M.P. (later Viscount Haldane), used to speak at our house too and he was the great Parliamentary hope of the Women's Franchise League, until Mother and Mrs. Jacob Bright, in earnest conversation with him about a Woman Suffrage Bill, found that he envisaged no early enactment of it! Mr. James Bryce, afterwards Lord Bryce, British Ambassador in the United States, was another frequenter of these gatherings. The ever-true friend Mr. Jacob Bright, M.P., who was at the opposite pole from his anti-suffragist brother, John Bright, came often, with his brilliant wife.

A strong affection united the Jacob Brights and my parents, and Mrs. Bright, who was several years older than Mother, had an almost maternal love for her. A frequent visitor and speaker was Mrs. Scatcherd, from Yorkshire, a great nursery favourite.

In our 'Home News' we chronicled suffrage receptions at which 'Mrs. Pankhurst looked elegant in a trained velvet gown', the 'Misses Pankhurst wore white crêpe dresses with worked yokes' and 'the refreshments were delicious, the strawberries and cream being especially so'. An eleven-year-old's impression of one gathering was this: 'Mrs. Pankhurst held an At Home at her beautiful house on May 28th. There was a great number of people there. Dr. Pankhurst, as Chairman, said in his speech that if the suffrage was not given to women, the result would be terrible. If a body was half of it bound, how was it to be expected that it would grow and develop properly. This body was the human race and the fettered half, women. He then, with many compliments, called upon Mrs. Fenwick Miller to speak. Mrs. Fenwick Miller spoke of the attitude of the political leaders and the growing power of the Women's Franchise League. Some opponents tried to prove that women were naturally inferior to men, but our girls won degrees and honours at the Universities. Mrs. Pankhurst wore a black sort of grenadine with train from shoulders, and looked very handsome indeed.'

Mrs. Cady Stanton, the woman suffrage pioneer from America, was a speaker who greatly interested us. Her daughter, Mrs. Stanton Blatch, was the wife of an Englishman, and already a friend. Mrs. Cady Stanton was one of a remarkable trio of anti-slavery pioneers whose zeal for freedom moved them to claim not only liberation for slaves, but also political enfranchisement for their own sex. The others of the trio were Lucretia Mott and Susan B. Anthony. Marble busts of

these three great women, the work of a woman, are now in the Capitol of Washington.

Mrs. Stanton Blatch has written about those days:

You ask for my impressions of your mother and father in my English days, and something about your mother's doings in America in the militant time.

Your mother was a living flame. As active as a bit of quicksilver, as glistening, as enticing. Emmeline Pankhurst was very beautiful. She looked like the model of Burne-Jones' pictures—slender, willowy, with the exquisite features of one of the saints of the great impressionist. Later on, I met at the Moncure D. Conway's the real model, Mrs. William Morris, and said to a fellow guest, 'How like Mrs. Pankhurst!'

One glorious summer day when my mother, Mrs. Cady Stanton, was visiting me, Dr. and Mrs. Pankhurst came down to Basingstoke to meet the American suffrage crusader. We had a wonderful walk on the terrace after luncheon. My mother was deeply impressed by our guests. She often referred afterwards to your father's learning and modesty and to your mother's vitality. That quality deeply impressed her, and she seemed to associate the gift of leadership with it.

To the end of my sojourn in England at the opening of the nineteen hundreds, your mother and I were associated. We parted, not to meet again until 1907 when we were both launched on militant suffrage campaigns, she in England and I in the State of New York.

Life in those days was not all politics. There were hours given to music-making. As those who heard her voice in speeches will suppose, Mother had a moving contralto voice. Father hardly knew one tune from the other—but he loved to hear his wife sing. We children would be admitted to the drawing-room for a while, and even after banishment to bed we could still hear the music through open doors and fall asleep listening.

Time passed; our parents wearied of the frequent separation, and the strain of business, which did not fulfil her grand hope, was telling upon Mother. They decided that the enterprise must be wound up and the home transferred to Manchester. Looking back, one can see how wise this was. It prepared for Mother's future conquering return to the capital. Her ends were shaped, had she foreknown it. To return to Manchester was to *reculer pour mieux sauter*.

There was much present gain. The lonely days at least were at an end. They had been spending irrecoverable years and losing too much present happiness in their hope of the future achievement. Father had realized this the more, because of his greater age, and had the more deplored every day passed apart from her. Any change was welcome to child minds, but still more welcome was the news that we were to live for a while at Southport. The seaside summed up all joys of life for us.

The most reposeful time of Mother's life was this Southport experience (excepting, it may be, a year spent long afterwards in Bermuda). There were no household, business, or political cares. Yet her active spirit was perhaps not wholly content and she looked forward to renewed occupation. Manchester was before us as our goal, but we reached it by way of a country place on the borders of Cheshire and Derbyshire, where we spent a summer.

Now came the move to Manchester. Our children's hearts were heavy at the prospect of life in the city, but we were wonderfully happy when we got there. We could see more than ever before of our parents, and, older now, could enter more fully into their life and interests, and appreciate their ideas and ideals.

We were entered at the Manchester High School for Girls, a large and, in comparison to our home schoolroom and the Southport School, at first rather formidable edifice. We never went to a boarding school and never wanted to, if only because it would have meant missing too much of Father and Mother. The attraction of two such personalities, and all the political and other interests and activities that centred in them, made home seem preferable to any school at a distance.

The picture now in my mind of those Manchester days is of the library, with flowered gold-and-brown paper and booklined walls. Mother reading, writing or sewing at one side of the big, glowing fire. Father at the other side, deep in a book. He stretches out his fine sensitive hand, now and again, to show that he is thinking of us all and enjoying our companionship. We schoolchildren had leave to do our homework at the big table and suddenly one or another would ask: 'Father, what is such and such?' or 'Who was so and so?' He was roused at once. Books were taken from the shelves, references and authorities were shown. The subject was illumined in all its ramifications.

Those Manchester days saw our parents turning towards the

Labour movement. The Labour leaders, who in time became national figures, came to the house. Some were of the *bourgeoisie* and privileged in education; among these were women as well as men. Others were proletarians, largely self-educated, and among these were few, if any, women. It seemed very difficult for working women to overcome the handicap of poverty, and the domestic cares which fettered them. Being voteless, they lacked prestige, whereas the women of higher social rank and more education had, in a mainly working-class milieu, a sort of relative equality. Mother regretted the disadvantages suffered by the working women, but she hoped that the developing Labour movement would charge itself with getting votes for women. In this movement she hoped there might be the means of righting every political and social wrong. Father, too, hoped that this growing party might succeed in ways where the old parties had failed. Even more perhaps than in its principles, he had hope in its personnel. The common people, to Father's generation, seemed almost, if not quite, a different creation. Some reckoned them innately inferior. Others, of whom Father was one, were tempted to think them, or at least hope them to be, possessed of an innate quality which would enable them, were they once free and powerful enough, to reform the world and its ways. He idealized them, as did Mother. The younger generation, speaking for myself, at any rate, who regarded all sorts and conditions of men and women just as persons and not in terms of class, could see no essential difference between working people and anyone else!

Mother wanted definitely to join the new movement. So did Father, but he hesitated, for his past experience and his daily touch with his fellow lawyers, with city councillors, business men, and others told him that trouble would come if he did so. Sympathy might be given from outside; identification would be a different and a serious thing. He questioned whether he had 'life and strength left to fight the position'. But he could never lag behind his conviction. He nailed his colours to the mast. Gallant as ever, he held his head high and faced the new storm that broke upon him as the first man of his sort and standing in the city, perhaps in the whole country, to join the Labour movement.

Mother's independent public service began about this time, when she was elected, under Labour auspices, a Poor Law Guardian for Chorlton upon Medlock, a district comprising a large and important part of the city. She had great happiness in her work as a Guardian

of the Poor, and she was from first to last on the friendliest terms with her colleagues on the Board. She was, of course, full of reforming zeal and relieved to find no resistance from officialdom; indeed the Clerk to the Guardians, Mr. Bloomfield, was ever ready to facilitate reform, and the same spirit was general among the officials. Many of the changes suggested or aided by Mother were matters of sheer common-sense and better housekeeping. Over and over again, they proved the benefit of the woman's point of view in the care of the young, the old, the sick, and the afflicted. Later, Mother, having observed the plight of the aged poor, in their 'old-age imprisonment', rejoiced for their sake at the all too long delayed establishment of Old Age Pensions, the best action of Mr. Lloyd George and the Liberal Government. She played a pioneer part in the establishment of cottage homes for children. At the national conference of Guardians, she read papers on the Poor Law and its administration. It was always with pride that she recalled that Queen Elizabeth I had initiated it. She was author of an important paper on the duties of Poor Law Guardians in times of unemployment, in which she suggested, among other plans, the employment of workless men in coastal reclamation and like projects of national improvement. If her point of view had received consideration, then and later, there would have been not *Unemployment Insurance* but *Employment Insurance*. . . .

A stand for Free Speech in suitable open-air spaces was another of Mother's concerns at that period. Meetings in Boggart Hole Clough, a large natural park, was the scene of action. There Mother, with the Labour elements, persisted in holding the meetings they had announced. Legal proceedings were taken, however, and there were even some imprisonments, though not of Mother herself, as her fine was paid. The right of public meeting in Boggart Hole Clough was not thereafter challenged.

In those days, as now, though in a minor degree, unemployment could become acute, and one cold winter the number of workless and hungry folk in the city made a positive crisis. Mother threw herself into the task of feeding them. Soup was provided in Stevenson Square, and thither came the foodless, bringing basins and jugs to be filled. Mother went to the market day after day, to plead for meat and bones and vegetables to be put into the cauldrons, and her appeals were fruitful. Mass service and mass generosity did not, however, represent the whole of Mother's giving. To individuals she was always ready

to lend a helping hand. In later years she continued, alone, the adoption of a band of children, long after the organization that had first maintained them was disbanded. This is but one of the kindnesses done to individuals during the course of her life.

But while eager to relieve distress, Mother sought always to strike at its source and to find the prevention that would make cure needless. Prompt, and more than prompt, in action as she was, she wearied of what she deemed the slow pace of established political parties. Hence it was that she turned to the Labour elements with hope that through them the grim problem of poverty might be solved. Later, however, she was to decide that, in order to gain the political power of the vote, it was needful for women to act independently of the men's political parties.

Dr. Pankhurst was invited, and consented, to be Labour Candidate for West Gorton, a working-class district of Manchester. He and Mother devoted their best energies to the campaign. We younger folk did what we could. Father, with his experience and his long devotion to the public interest, would have brought the case of the industrial North before Parliament with a rare appeal and power. He was defeated. He took the defeat with his head up. If he thought that his costly espousal of the Labour movement had gone for little, he never said it. He went on helping them, satisfied to have abided by his life's principle—down with private interest, up with the public cause.

We were very happy in our private family life. Those were the best of all the years. If politics and movements did mean forgoing some things that other people's children had, those other children had not our Father and Mother, our interesting life. Our lot contented us; we were proud of it.

Father sparkled for us as much as—or more than—for his friends. His courtesy in his home was complete and his loving ways invariable. Mother was queen—'Where's my lady?' was always his first word. Some of the poor people took to calling her Lady Pankhurst with a vague idea that this must be her title. He never in our hearing addressed her by her first name, but always by some word of endearment. I remember no rebukes or punishments from him, so they must have been rare, if any. At the same time, one felt how stern might have been his view of insubordinate conduct.

Only his wife knew all Father's regret that he could not give more effect to his ideals, could not do more to overthrow the social evils which men of all ranks and parties now are openly condemning and attacking.

So sped the years until Father and Mother judged the moment come to fulfil a pledge and project of her Paris schooldays. She and Noémie Rochefort had then agreed that if ever they should marry and have daughters, these should stay in the home of the other to learn French or English language and ways, as the case might be. Accordingly I, as eldest daughter, was now to stay with Madame Rochefort-Dufaux, who by this time had settled in Geneva. Mother was to take me to Geneva, stay a little while and leave me there. She was all joy at the thought of spending some weeks with her friend, whom she had seen only on rare occasions during their married life.

The Geneva prospect was pleasant enough to me also, except that it meant a final, irrevocable 'growing up'. Mother had looked forward to sharing with me her love for Paris. I fear that I did not altogether rise to the heights desired, for she wrote to Father: 'Christabel takes it all with her usual calm.' In later years I was to make up for this and to feel the same admiration and affection for the city. Lovely days followed, sitting in the garden, bathing, motoring—motor-cars were more of a rarity then—and voyaging on the Lake by steamer or row-boat.

If only Father could have been there, all would have been perfect. It was a long time since Mother and he had been thus parted. Nineteen years, nearly, they had been married, but his letters were more love letters than at the beginning. 'When you return, we will have a new honeymoon and reconsecrate each to the other in unity of heart. Be happy. Love and love, Your husband, R. M. Pankhurst.'

So he wrote in his last letter—his parting word to her. It was tea-time in the garden at Corsier at the height of the holiday when the bolt fell. 'Father ill. Come' said the telegram. Mother was off by the first train, leaving me behind . . . to Paris, London, into the Manchester train. There she read, in the evening paper: 'Dr. Pankhurst dead.'

It was the collapse of our happy life, of our world as it had been. Sylvia, poor Sylvia, had met the shock alone. Only fifteen, knowing so little of sickness and death, she had been in sole command with no one at hand older than herself, except the servants, when the adored father was taken ill, and the 'gastric neuralgia' that had now and again

troubled him suddenly proved a gastric ulcer. This rapid illness left everyone helpless. The responsibility, the shock, were terrible for her. To Mother's grief for her husband was added anxiety for her daughter.

Manchester felt the loss of her great citizen, her well-loved Doctor, 'one of the most high-minded and self-sacrificing public men,' said the newspapers, 'that Manchester has produced'. Often to this day I meet in Canada and the United States men and women who tell me: 'I knew your dear father . . . I remember Dr. Pankhurst. . . . He taught me in his Sunday School class when I was a boy. . . . I heard him lecture. . . . I voted for him when he was a candidate for Parliament.'

Knowledge of what was happening at home came to me only by letter, for by Mother's wish I remained in Switzerland waiting to hear what she wished me to do. I have found a few of my letters among her papers, and in one of them is this: 'I often think of the last thing that Father said to me. "Be nice to her; she will feel it at first", meaning that you would feel leaving him, and the other three. Dear darling, he did not know. . . .'

Sympathy came to Mother from every side. 'Your sorrow is shared by thousands,' said one of the city's leading men.

She had now to face the practical exigencies of life. The course that Father and she had taken through the years, the expense of serving the public interest, of supporting reform movements and latterly joining the Labour Party, which Mother had herself so strongly urged, meant that, now suddenly and unexpectedly widowed, she had to maintain herself and her children. I remember how Father used to talk of education—youthful freedom from care, to be prolonged, until twenty-five years of age, when it would be best to marry or embark on a profession, or both. Now he had suddenly gone and we were all minors still. We had our patrimony though—which we did, and always would, treasure in our memory of him. Today, I read in the newspapers a compassionate and admiring tribute to lawyers who, by accepting political place and emoluments as Cabinet Ministers, forgo, during their term of office, 'anything between thirty to fifty thousand pounds a year'. It reminds me of all that Father sacrificed in his life-long subordination of private to public interest. For he was the equal of any of them, a jurist as great, an advocate as brilliant and persuasive. Reviewing the past and the choice he made for himself and for us I again endorse his choice. Mother had, jointly with him,

made that choice, and she never went back on it, even in her early widowhood, when difficulty closed in on her, nor in her later years, after the triumphant end of her main life's work. Their children never questioned their course. If we had to choose between the two sorts of patrimony, then, in spite of everything, we preferred the one we had. Money could never have bought it or replaced it.

Mother, faced by her new and sudden responsibility, thought of a business to be launched with her available resources and conducted with her former experience. Indeed she could think of nothing else to do. 'You are so clever,' I wrote to her, 'that it seems strange that there is not something more suited to you.' For all her gifts and powers, she had never been trained for a definite career and there were so few careers open to women in those pre-suffrage days. Mother had now to fulfil a man's responsibilities in a world that wholly underrated the economic value of its political outlaws, women.

Advice she might have obtained from many at that time, when mourning for Father and sympathy with her were at their height. I have found among the letters of condolence which she kept one telling her that 'an eminent lawyer has given me to understand that the Bar would go to great lengths to defend from any serious mischief the family of one of its chief ornaments'. But then, as always, she was sensitive, shy, proud concerning her personal and private concerns, and her strong, self-reliant nature made her all the more reserved in discussing her plans. Some solid acknowledgment was suggested as a return for Father's manifold services to the public. Mother checked this, on some word that came to her notice and that touched her independent spirit. She wrote to me afterwards asking if I approved. Of course I did.

Plans for each of the family were considered. Sylvia's future was decided by her gift for painting and by the studentship she obtained at the Manchester School of Art. Adela, for the time being at least, had teaching in view, and Harry was at the Grammar School.

As to my own future, I did not know of anything I should like to do and my role was, as the eldest child, to help Mother, as the letters of condolence I received expressed it, and as I myself recognized. Mother's first idea for her own business activity had been dress-making, suggested by her own flair for good dressing. I wrote to her: 'Have you any ideas about me yet? Madame Dufaux thinks I ought to go in for dressmaking too.'

Mother had come to feel a distinct prejudice against professional careers and to regard an anonymous business as more compatible with freedom of opinion. So failing any strong preference on my part, her suggestion was that I should be her right hand in the business which she was preparing to start.

She decided finally that this should again be a shop, selling artistic wares, silks, cushions, and the rest. She wanted me to continue to improve my French a little longer, and then to return to help her in this venture. It was with resignation, rather than with enthusiasm, that I viewed my future, for I felt no aptitude for business. But I could suggest no practicable alternative. In any case, the time and circumstances were far too sad and grave for the assertion of likes or dislikes. Nothing seemed to matter very much, anyhow, and if one could be of some use that would be all to the good.

Mother's fellow members of the Board of Guardians were greatly moved by her trouble. It was they who nominated her for the vacant position of Registrar of Births and Deaths. This appointment, with its steady income and the pension to follow on retirement at a not advanced age, was a great boon. It involved Mother's resignation as a Poor Law Guardian and she was regretful to give up that labour of love. Later she was co-opted, on the nomination of the Manchester and Salford Trades Union Council, as a member of the Manchester School Board. The loss of her husband and partner in service had, however, for the time being, taken from her all real heart for public affairs.

A new house in Nelson Street, where now the great Infirmary stands, was to be our new home, an attractive building which Mother arranged with all her good taste.

Mother summoned me and I went home. A home so changed! It had been midsummer when I went away. When I returned, summer had gone. So it was in our life and home. All was now in the minor key, depressed, forlorn. Mother was in eclipse—heroic as ever, and energetic in her doings, but wan, and with a tragic look that never quite left her through all the ensuing years, even those years of conquering leadership that gave her fame. This trial, the double burden of family care which she was now bearing, matured her the more for the fight she was later to make for the women's cause.

Mother had not given up her business project on obtaining the registrarship. Her hours of official duty were short and mainly in the

earlier morning and the evening. She wanted a fuller occupation, work being ever her recourse in sorrow. She hoped that in the business she might build something that would benefit her children and provide an occupation for me. Her former experience was useful and she soon had all in working order. The new home routine established itself and Mother was ever fortunate in those who served her.

Sylvia, all this time, had been distinguishing herself at the School of Art and the two youngest children were pursuing their course.

My Work Begins

University—Friendships—First Recruit—New Tactics

I BEGAN my work as Mother's right hand. Morning after morning saw me in the tram, reading the newspaper on the way to business, one of very few girls so travelling at that hour in those pre-war days. Mother would follow me later after her official duties closed.

My resolves were good but as time went on I felt more and more unqualified for this avocation. Business was not good for me and I was not good for business. Perhaps I ought to have forced myself to an interest in my task, yet if I had, subsequent events might have pursued a very different course.

Mother, seeing my unhappy case, suggested some classes at the University. These were, at once, a great mitigation. I had not time to take a full course of lectures leading to a degree, so took logic under Professor Alexander and another course or two. Those lectures were my gateway to a future so filled with inspiring thoughts and activity that I came to reckon myself the happiest person on earth. I found my aim in life.

Dashing to lectures and away again, I had no real touch with the University, but one late afternoon meeting I managed to attend. The Vice-Chancellor, Sir Alfred Hopkinson, spoke on the poets and politics, and a discussion followed. I had had not the faintest intention of saying a word; yet, to my own surprise, the discourse and the debate stirred a thought in me and the thought would out. I rose and rather nervously uttered a sentence or two. 'Who is that?' the Vice-Chancellor asked the graduate sitting beside him, and in his closing remarks he referred in a very kind way to my maiden speech, saying: 'As one speaker has well said, it is after all the attitude of mind of the poet . . .'

Miss Esther Roper descended from the platform at the close of the meeting and overtook me. She was secretary of the North of England

Society for Woman Suffrage, and one of the committee of the National Union of Woman Suffrage Societies led by Mrs. Fawcett. Miss Roper and her friend Eva Gore-Booth, secretary of the Manchester Women's Trade Council, played an important part in the final phase of the Suffrage movement. Esther Roper had stirred Eva Gore-Booth to strong interest in the women's cause and the latter left, for its sake, her home in the West of Ireland to live in Manchester. Between them, they were conducting something of a woman suffrage revival.

Miss Roper and Miss Gore-Booth insisted that the working woman needed the vote as a weapon of self defence, just as much as did the working man. This argument had gained a new force because of the movement for men's labour representation in Parliament which developed into the Labour Party. Women's labour representation was even more needful, urged Miss Roper and Miss Gore-Booth, because of the terribly low wages of working women. In those voteless days the condition of women workers was far worse than now, and without the hope of improvement the vote now provides. Necessity forced women into the labour market, where they were reckoned interlopers by the men, whose wage level they threatened. Organizations of women workers were almost powerless, because the industrial units composing them were politically powerless. It is not the work of a moment to reverse such an order; but every politically powerful class will eventually procure its own economic welfare. It was the knowledge of this fact that inspired the suffrage activities of those faithful champions of the working women, Esther Roper and Eva Gore-Booth.

I joined their respective committees and fought many a battle by their side, with a view to getting woman suffrage recognized as a question of urgent practical importance from the industrial point of view. This was a stage in my political apprenticeship of great and lasting value, and I owed much to the example and sympathy of these two friends. I had been reared in the suffrage cause and the principle of equality had been lived out in our home. In fact, it was the sharp contrast between practical suffragism in the home circle and the inequality I saw meted out to women in general in the outer world that made me see in the suffrage cause one, not of merely academic interest, but of stern practical importance.

My first committee was composed largely of my father's contemporaries, all members with him of the original committee for woman suffrage. They welcomed me benevolently, for my parents' sake. The

other, the Women's Trade Union Council, existed to organize the yet unorganized working women. Our object was to commit this Council to the policy of claiming the vote as a weapon of industrial defence and at the same time to stir the Woman Suffrage Committee to a more vigorous propaganda.

The work outside the committee-room was of great political and human interest. Miss Roper, Miss Gore-Booth, Mrs. Dickinson and I spoke indoors and outdoors, in Manchester and neighbouring places, urging the economic importance to women of abolishing their political outlawry, since this would raise their human status and give them a voice in legislation affecting their interests. My political path was easy. 'Dr. Pankhurst's daughter' was the passport to the friendship of one and all, in Lancashire, Cheshire, and Yorkshire, the sphere of action in my early suffrage days.

Here, then, was an aim in life for me—the liberation of politically fettered womanhood.

One decision I came to firmly; it was that this vote question must be settled. Mine was the third generation of women to claim the vote and the vote must now be obtained. To go on helplessly pleading was undignified. Strong and urgent demand was needed. Success must be hastened or women's last political state would be worse than their first.

Incidentally, I now began the study of law. Mother was telling Miss Roper of something I had done regarding some woman's problem and her response was: 'She ought to be a lawyer.' That was then impossible, of course, but Mother was delighted by the idea. She resolved to ask Lord Haldane, for the sake of former days and as an avowed supporter of equal rights and opportunities for women, to sponsor me in my application to become a law student at Lincoln's Inn with a view to admission to the Bar. We chose Lincoln's Inn because that would mean following in Father's footsteps. Lord Haldane very kindly assented to Mother's request. My application was refused, with those of Miss Ivy Williams, LL.D., and Miss Bertha Cave, complete strangers to us, who at this time decided to make like applications. Miss Cave and I were afterwards invited to address the Union Society in London, but although the assembled lawyers carried the motion in favour of the admission of women to their profession, that did not open the door closed against us.

I began at the University of Manchester a course leading to the degree of LL.B., for Mother thought it well to give this evidence of

serious purpose behind my recent application. It also seemed that a knowledge of law might be useful in work for woman suffrage, and useful it was indeed to prove. The threefold task of business, woman suffrage work, and study for the degree would be rather difficult to manage, yet Mother liked to have one of her own family by her side in her business. Formerly it had been her sister. In her latest venture it had been I, and now she turned to her second daughter, Sylvia. After her travelling scholarship ran out, Sylvia had stayed on in Venice and she was still there. Mother now called her home to take a turn of business duty. Sylvia's artistic gift might adapt her better than me to some phases of the undertaking, especially as her task was mainly to design and paint in a studio, but she, too, was not born for business. She did part-time at business, part-time at the School of Art. After a while she returned wholly to the School of Art and continued her success there.

Then Mother herself, whose political zeal was reviving, yielded to the competing claims of politics. She gave up her business and concentrated upon her official duties and upon the campaign for women's enfranchisement.

Mother strongly approved the idea of urging the Labour movement to make woman suffrage an urgent part of its programme and so bring the question into immediate practical politics, if only by stirring the other political parties to emulation. The practical difficulty was, however, that Labour men cared relatively little for franchise reform even for men, because already the working-men voters were in a majority. 'We have votes enough to get all we want, if the votes are used as we wish them to be used,' was their thought. To be in favour of women having the vote was the proper thing, but when it came to action there were many other matters that to men, even Labour men, seemed much more important. Mother and I arrived at the conclusion that who would be politically free herself must strike the blow, and that women could not do better than pay the independent Labour movement the compliment of imitation, by starting an independent women's movement.

'Women,' said Mother on a memorable occasion, 'we must do the work ourselves. We must have an independent women's movement. Come to my house tomorrow and we will arrange it!'

Next day a little group assembled, mostly wives of Labour men; women of character and personality. We resolved ourselves into the Women's Social and Political Union, on an independent non-party, non-class foundation. Neither Mother nor I held any office. We did not want the Pankhurst name to appear lest the Union be discounted as 'just Mrs. Pankhurst and Christabel' and dubbed 'a family party'. Later on, when the W.S.P.U. grew to be a power in the land, it mattered not what anyone called it. It became a family party indeed, when hosts of women of all sorts and conditions, in all parts of the country, were united by a common purpose and devotion. We gloried in being in that sense a family party, but in the small beginnings of things it was politic that officers should not have the Pankhurst name.

W.S.P.U. business was done at weekly meetings and all present subscribed what they could to the funds. Mother supplied the rest of the money needed. Militancy was not part of the programme in those early days. Our work was still entirely peaceful and educational, being designed to prove to the public women's need of the vote and to rouse women to insist that the political parties, including the new Labour Party, should take practical and speedy action in our cause.

Heavy work it was to travel hither and thither, to Lancashire, and Cheshire, and the West Riding of Yorkshire, watching occasion, and taking it, to bring woman suffrage to the fore, at public meetings, at Trade Union gatherings, at lecture and debating societies, in parks and fair grounds, and at street corners. 'Won't you speak on some *other* subject than the Vote?' would be the appeal, but the answer was always adamantly: No. We did not speak for speaking's sake. If we could not have a say on the great and vital cause, then we would rather stay comfortably at home. As women speakers were then more of a rarity than now and much in demand, the answer would be: 'Please come all the same and speak on whatever you will.' Fine training for speakers was all that varied and incessant platform experience. To speak innumerable times, in widely differing conditions, indoors and outdoors, at the smallest and the largest meetings, to all sorts of people, of every place in the social and educational scale—that led to elasticity, suppleness and naturalness, a command of a speaker's whole resources—in a word, to spontaneity.

In those early days Annie Kenney joined us. The Oldham Trades Council asked me to address a meeting, and as my subject was the

vote, women were to be present. A small gathering it was—but Annie Kenney was there! Then, as often, it proved that a small meeting may have greater results than one attended by ten thousand. When I had spoken, three eager, vividly intelligent girls, with shining eyes, came up to me. They were Annie Kenney and her sisters. Annie was full of the thought that her fellow workers in the cotton factory must hear. Would I come and speak if a meeting were arranged for them? I consented, not so much for the sake of the other girls as to test Annie, of whom at this first sight I hoped great things. If she carried through her plan for a meeting this would show fidelity of purpose. If I heard no more of the meeting, it would be a case of crackling thorns as soon burnt out as lit. I gave her my address and departed. Quickly came a letter enclosing printed handbills. She was only a novice at getting up meetings, the other girls in the factory were not all Annie Kennys, and many still cared far too little for votes to come to the meeting. But Annie played her part truly and well at that beginning, as she was to play it all through the fight, and notably and indispensably at two moments of crisis to be dealt with hereafter. Her little meeting made us friends and allies. Mother met her and she became as one of our family. Evening by evening, after her day's work, and on Saturday afternoons, she would take train to Manchester, make for our house and join in whatever work was doing for the cause. Her influence with women workers increased and she was elected, its one woman member, to the Oldham Trades Council. She gained platform experience and the W.S.P.U. had one speaker the more.

Our speaking force was increased, too, by Teresa Billington, a Manchester teacher. She, having consulted Mother, as a member of the education authority, about her professional concerns, became interested in W.S.P.U. activities and wished to share in these. She became a power in debate and could make short work of any platform opponent. So the 'family party' grew, one recruit after another being added to our band, still weak in numbers, but strong in hope and resolve. Memory here calls up other dear companions of that time who made their stand and played their part by our side. Mrs. Scott, our first secretary, genial and full of humour; Mrs. Harker, serious and determined; Mrs. Morrissey, lovable and all kindness, and others equally to be praised, links in a long, strong chain that reached from the earliest effort to the victory.

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Militancy really began on 20th February 1904, at a first Free Trade Hall meeting with a protest of which little was heard and nothing remembered—because it did not result in imprisonment!

The Free Trade League, a renaissance of the Anti-Corn Law organization, had announced its initial meeting in the Free Trade Hall to be addressed by Mr. Winston Churchill. I applied for a ticket and received one for the platform. This was excellent for my purpose. Mr. Churchill had moved that 'this meeting affirms its unshakable belief in the principles of Free Trade adopted more than fifty years ago . . .'; others had seconded and supported the resolution, when, as related by the *Manchester Guardian*:

Miss Pankhurst asked to be allowed to move an amendment with regard to Woman Suffrage. The Chairman said he was afraid he could not permit such an addition. It contained words and sentiments on a matter more or less contentious to which persons absolutely agreed on the question of Free Trade might have difficulty in giving their support. Miss Pankhurst seemed loth to give way, but finally, amid loud cries of 'Chair', she retired. The Chairman read the addition which Miss Pankhurst proposed to make to the resolution which asked that the Representation of the People Acts should be so amended that the words importing the masculine gender should include women. He was sorry, he said, that he must adhere to his decision not to put it.

This was the first militant step—the hardest to me, because it *was* the first. To move from my place on the platform to the speaker's table in the teeth of the astonishment and opposition of will of that immense throng, those civic and county leaders and those Members of Parliament, was the most difficult thing I have ever done.

Something had been gained. Women's claim to vote had been imposed upon the attention of political leaders and the public, at one of the decisive political meetings of the century. The trouble was that the thought of woman suffrage quickly faded. I reproached myself for having given way too easily. Next time such a meeting was held, a mark should be made that could not disappear. Thus militancy had its origin in purpose.

We were now urging that the next Liberal Government, confidently predicted by Liberals themselves, should grant women the vote.

Mother, attending the usual sessional gatherings of Women

Suffragists and friendly M.P.s in London, struck a practical note by asking what these M.P.s were going to do to bring the cause at last to fruition, but could elicit no constructive reply. The outcome of much activity by all the organizations interested was the introduction of a Woman Suffrage Bill, the first for many years. Mother had worked mightily to get this Bill introduced. She had spent all the time she could spare in London, urging M.P.s to action. She passed hours in the lobby with Sylvia, who was now living in London, actively pushed forward by the hope that the Conservative Government would, before the nearing General Election, help this Bill to reach the Statute Book. Mother's efforts indeed put non-militant methods to the fullest proof—and this without reckoning the efforts of the other suffragists! In Manchester, also, where the Conservative Prime Minister had his seat, we did all that political experience could suggest and energy accomplish to drive through the Bill by peaceful means. It was, in short, a great effort to win votes for women by non-militant methods.

The Bill was talked out! Peaceful methods had failed. This news reached the waiting, anxious women gathered in the lobby of the House of Commons. Mother, who herself had worked so hard for the Bill and shared the indignation of the women at the news of its massacre, called upon them to follow her outside for a meeting of protest. With Mrs. Wolstenholme Elmy, the aged pioneer, Mrs. Martel, the woman voter from Australia, Sylvia, and many others, Mother proceeded to the statue of Richard Cœur de Lion, a suitable place of meeting. The police, who had first sought to disperse the women and who took names of some, finally directed them to Broad Sanctuary, where speeches were made and a resolution adopted condemning the Government's action in allowing a small minority to talk out the Bill.

1905—Militancy

Prison—N.-W. Manchester Election—The Liberal Rally

AS THE year 1905 went on, the Liberal Party was more clearly in the ascendant and the Liberal leaders counted upon early political office. Manchester—the Free Trade Hall—was again to be the scene of a rally at which the Liberal Party would utter their war cry for the General Election. Here was my chance! I would make amends for my weakness in not pressing that earlier amendment! Now there should be an act the effect of which would remain, a protest not of word but of deed. Prison this time! Prison would mean a fact that could not fade from the record, a proof of women's political discontent, a demonstration that the political subjection of women rested not on women's consent but on *force majeure* used to impose and enforce it.

Compelling argument for our protest at this Free Trade Hall meeting was provided. Unemployment was, just then, as it has been in more recent days, a pressing problem. Great hope had been set upon the Unemployment Bill brought before Parliament, but the Conservative Government was accused of frustrating this hope by shelving the Bill. The Manchester unemployed gathered at an open-air protest meeting in a place unauthorized by the police. The meeting was dispersed, the crowd scattering hither and thither. Quite a small and mild affair it was, as we on the spot well knew, but the news grew in telling, and reached London as an Unemployed Riot in Manchester. The politicians were stirred—they acted. The Unemployment Bill was brought down from the shelf and passed into law.

We must do something like that to get a Woman Suffrage Bill carried, I resolved. Militancy by the unemployed, *militancy that was only thought to have happened*, moved the Government to do what before they would not or could not do! That Government, like preceding Governments, had shelved woman suffrage, although Mr.

Balfour, the Prime Minister, was himself in favour of it, and a majority of the House of Commons was pledged to it. Women had greater justification for militant methods than the unemployed, because, unlike men, they were without any constitutional means of gaining their end. The more democratic the constitution, the more deaf the ruling Government to the pleas of any class that was voteless and so outside the Constitution. Women today, with their immense voting power, are rapidly forgetting, and the younger ones never knew, what was the political and the economic helplessness of women in the days when Mother put herself behind militancy. It was a tremendous and, she knew, irrevocable decision.

That night of the first arrest and imprisonment is unforgettable. The life of the Conservative Government was ebbing fast, so we wasted no powder and shot upon them. The Liberal leaders, who were to replace them in office, must be challenged on the fundamental principle of Liberalism—government of the people by the people, even such of the people as happened to be women. If the new Liberal Government were willing to enfranchise women, the Liberal leaders would say so; if they were not willing, then militancy would begin. A straight question must be put to them—a straight answer obtained.

Good seats were secured for the Free Trade Hall meeting. The question was painted on a banner in large letters, in case it should not be made clear enough by vocal utterance. How should we word it? 'Will you give woman suffrage?'—we rejected that form, for the word Suffrage suggested to some unlettered or jesting folk the idea of suffering. 'Let them suffer away!'—we had heard the taunt. We must find another wording and we did! It was so obvious and yet, strange to say, quite new. Our banner bore this terse device:

WILL YOU GIVE
VOTES
FOR WOMEN?

Thus was uttered for the first time the famous and victorious battle-cry: 'Votes for Women!'

Busy with white calico, black furniture stain and paint-brushes, we soon had our banner ready, and Annie Kenney and I set forth to victory, in the form of an affirmative Liberal answer, or to prison. We knew only too well that the answer we longed for would be refused.

'We shall sleep in prison tonight,' said I to Mother. Her face was drawn and cold when I said goodbye. Our action was really hers. She accepted the responsibility of a militant policy, which she knew must be continued until victory. She considered, as we two young ones who went into the fray that night naturally did not quite so deeply consider, its effect upon our own lives. She realized that her official post, with its present emoluments and future pension, was at stake; she foresaw a day, which later arrived, when she would have to choose between surrendering that position and giving up the militant campaign which she believed politically necessary for the enfranchisement of women. It was for Mother an hour of crisis. She stood utterly alone in the world, so far as this decision to militancy was concerned. Reckoning the cost in advance, Mother prepared to pay for it, for women's sake. The loss might be all hers, but the gain would be theirs.

The Free Trade Hall was crowded. The sky was clear for a Liberal victory—save for a little cloud no bigger than a woman's hand! Calm, but with beating hearts, Annie and I took our seats and looked at the exultant throng we must soon anger by our challenge. Their cheers as the speakers entered gave us the note and pitch of their emotion. Speech followed speech. Interruptions came from eager partisans or from a few stray critics. The interrupters, we noticed, were ignored or good-humouredly answered. But, then, they were all men and voters! Our plan was to wait until the speakers had said their say, before asking our question. We must, for one thing, give these Liberal leaders and spokesmen the opportunity of explaining that their programme included political enfranchisement for women.

Annie as the working woman—for this should make the stronger appeal to Liberals—rose first and asked: 'Will the Liberal Government give votes to women?' No answer came. I joined my voice to hers and our banner was unfurled, making clear what was our question. The effect was explosive! The meeting was aflame with excitement. Some consultation among chairman and speakers ensued and then the Chief Constable of Manchester, Sir Robert Peacock, genial and paternal in manner, made his way to us and promised us, on behalf of the platform, an answer to our question after the vote of thanks had been made. We accepted the undertaking and again we waited. We gave him our question in writing. The vote of thanks was carried. Sir Edward Grey

rose to reply without one word in answer to our question! The bargain thus broken on his side, we were free to renew our simple question: 'Will the Liberal Government give women the vote?' The answer came then—not in word, but in deed. Stewards rushed at us, aided by volunteers and accompanied by loud cries: 'Throw them out!' We were dragged from our seats and along the centre aisle, resisting as strongly as we could and still calling out: 'Will the Liberal Government give women the vote?'

Violence answered our demand for justice. Yet better violence than jeers, sneers, or silent contempt. Equality was ours that night, we felt, for the force used against us proved that our question was a thrust which had touched the new Government-to-be in a vital spot. The meeting was in frenzy. We were being dragged nearer to the platform which we must pass before our captors could get us behind the scenes. With more than all my strength, resisting theirs, I could stand a moment below the platform. I looked into Sir Edward Grey's face, eye to eye, and asked him again: 'Will your Liberal Government give votes to women?' I remember thinking that, suitably wreathed and attired, he would have looked exactly like a Roman Emperor. Pale, expressionless, immovable, he returned me look for look. I was swept away through the side door, which muffled the deafening tumult in the hall. A revulsion of feeling came in the audience as we disappeared from view. There were cries of 'Shame!' and of sympathy with the questioners. In deference to this, Sir Edward Grey said he was not sure that unwittingly he had not been a contributing cause of the incident which he regretted. The trouble, he understood, had arisen from a desire to know his opinion on woman suffrage, but it was a question that he could not deal with that night, because it was not, and he did not think it likely to be, a party question. His words too plainly meant that women would not in his opinion ever get the vote!

Outside the auditorium and behind the scenes, we were in the grip of policemen and surrounded by stewards. The matter must not, I knew, stay where it was. The Free Trade Hall protest twenty months before had taught me that. What we had done must be made a decisive act of lasting import. We must, in fact, bring the matter into Court, into prison. For simply disturbing the meeting I should not be imprisoned. I must use the infallible means of getting arrested, I must 'assault the police'. But how was I to do it? The police seemed to be skilled to frustrate my purpose. I could not strike them, my arms were

being held. I could not even stamp on their toes—they seemed able to prevent that. Yet I must bring myself under arrest. The vote depended upon it. There could be no compromise at that moment of crisis. Lectures on the law flashed to my mind. I could, even with all limbs helpless, commit a technical assault and so I found myself arrested and charged with ‘spitting at a policeman’. It was not a real spit but only, shall we call it, a ‘pout’, a perfectly dry purse of the mouth. I could not *really* have done it, even to get the vote, I think. Anyhow, there was no need, my technical assault was enough.

But how awful it was to read in the newspaper next morning, and I could not and dare not explain the entirely technical and symbolic character of the act, because the magistrate might have discharged me and the political purpose in view would not have been achieved. Even after I came out of prison I was afraid of explaining and so seeming to weaken or recant. It was a great comfort when some person wrote of me as a spitfire. That seemed to show a certain approach to discernment of the real fact.

Annie and I, to make assurance doubly sure, were as militant as we could be, in speaking to the crowd outside the hall. The police dragged us off, followed by a veritable procession of members of the audience. ‘What would your father have said to this?’ asked one policeman reprovingly. I thought I knew what he would have said. Then a light dawned on another policeman: ‘Why, this is what they have been aiming at!’

Arrived at the police station, we were uncompromising and duly defiant. The charge against us must, we were resolved, be entered, and it was. We refused to be bailed out, lest the vital chain of events be broken. Not anxious, it seemed, to display the wretched hospitality of the police cells, they sent us home without bail, adjuring us to appear next morning at the Police Court. We assured them that we should be there!

Mother was anxiously awaiting us and we told her all. Next morning we found that the long, long newspaper silence as to woman suffrage was broken. So far, so good.

Mother came with us to the Police Court. We shivered rather on entering. Police Courts then were associated in my mind only with the sordid and discreditable. However, we were there. A benign magistrate, who had known Father, was not at all severe! But we gave him not the least chance or excuse to let us off. To prison we went.

One was entering the unknown. Prison was a word of unimaginable possibilities. We entered its gates, received prison clothes to wear, of antique pattern, scrubby texture and incredible thickness in layers and layers of pleats. Cells were box-like, lit by high small windows. A stool, a shelf as table, rolled-up bed and a plank on which to spread it at night, an array of tins with a wooden spoon, unpleasantly and unhygienically porous. Such was the furniture. A Bible lay on the table, and for that much thanks! Later we knew of library books coming round and chose the longest. Food, served in the tins, was, according to the time of day, a thickish gruel, bread of dark complexion, yet preferable, I admit, to some of the dead-white, lifeless stuff we get when at large; a sort of broth with floating meat; tea or a cocoa brew to drink! Imprisonment was solitary, save for the time in chapel and at exercise when there was a single-file march, round and round the high-walled yard. Prison hardships were negligible to us. We were thinking of other things. On the question of prison conditions I may say, out of experience thereof, that the hardest of these conditions is—*being in prison*, the deprivation of liberty. The joy of the first day out of prison cannot be expressed. To pass outside those gates is to come alive again. But soon the glory fades and one forgets to remember how precious is the common liberty of everyday.

During that first imprisonment, short, but so long-seeming, because it was the first, kindly visitors came to urge me to have the fine paid and come out. One, a prison visitor, a friend of Mother's who afterwards joined our ranks, appealed in this sense, but when she failed seemed to be really sympathetic after all. Then came a visiting magistrate, another old friend of Father's. He arrived as the midday meal was being brought to my cell. Viewing this unappetizing fare with disfavour, he exclaimed: 'Fancy your father's daughter eating such food! Why don't you come away this minute! Let me pay your fine!' He was really distressed. He accepted my explanation with a genial smile and seemed to understand. One evening, between eight and nine o'clock—a late hour for prisoners—as I lay on plank and straw mattress, there came a sharp knock at the cell door and a loud voice announced that someone stood at the prison gate wanting to pay the fine and secure my instant release.

'No,' I said, 'I will not have my fine paid!'

Receding footsteps, silence, and that was the end of that! But rumour went that Mr. Winston Churchill, Sir Edward Grey's partner

on the platform, had called or sent an emissary to pay the fine. We neither knew nor cared to know who had tried to release us before the day which the law and our own resolve had fixed. Annie and I knew that in the contest of wills our will must prevail. This was the decisive battle in the war between women and the Liberal Party. The Liberals had started the war with women, but they must not win it, however long it might last.

The moment of release arrived, and at eight o'clock one morning we passed through bolts and bars to the outer world. A crowd was waiting; all pressed forward but one outstripped the rest. She was a complete stranger to me, but she gave me the first greeting. It was Flora Drummond. We were friends at sight. She became another pillar of the movement and one of its most notable personalities.

Mother, then, and home, and all the news! Not an echo from the outside world had penetrated the prison walls and we knew nothing of how things had turned out. Mother had had the brunt of it to bear—being in prison was easy and peaceful, compared to what she had to bear. Anger, criticism, had run high. We had known that must happen. Mother and I had together faced it, before we took the fateful step of forcing the Liberal leaders to fight or give votes to women.

The world, at that time, was at its most tranquil. The Boer War had receded into the past and the greater upheaval of 1914 was still undreamt of. Breaking in upon that placidity, this outbreak of women's militancy was the more startling. Since 1914 the world has grown accustomed to real and terrible disturbance, but then it took less to thrill and startle it. That women should rise alone and independently, solely for the women's cause, was a thing without precedent.

Mother's heroine's heart was needed in those first critical hours. It is not so easy now to realize the position in which she then stood. A widow, with still dependent children, risking (and eventually losing) her income and future pension in the Government service, Mother had stood firm against a world. From the blow she thus struck with her own hand at her position and fortune, there might have been no recovery, especially in those days. She faced the risk and took it—for women's sake. As history knows, she did not take it in vain, and victory was to follow.

Among Suffragists of other camps, Esther Roper and Eva Gore-Booth were foremost in expressing sympathy with Mother in the crisis. In the militant years that followed, nothing rejoiced us more

than the support of such pioneers as Mrs. Bright Maclaren (John Bright's sister), Dr. Garrett Anderson (the pioneer medical woman), who herself, despite her weight of years, once braved arrest by going with Mother at the head of a deputation to the Houses of Parliament. Mrs. Ashworth Hallett, Mrs. Wolstenholme Elmy, Miss J. C. Methuen, Mrs. Taylor of Chipchase and many another were with us in sympathy.

The Free Trade Hall meeting of welcome to the two prisoners was crowded. Teresa Billington and a band of workers had, in that short week, organized and advertised it with energy, and the Manchester public were, of course, greatly stirred by the event which had echoed through the newspapers of the world. Perhaps Manchester folk, on the principle that what Manchester thinks today, England will think tomorrow, were, even then, not without an intuition that militancy, started there, would spread and triumph in the country as a whole. We two prisoners, speaking that night in the very hall whence a week before we had been forcibly ejected, confidently foresaw the day of future victory. That great meeting made it evident that the first storm had been weathered. Our first and decisive battle had been won.

We had certainly broken the Press silence on votes for women, that silence which, by keeping women uninformed, had so largely smothered and strangled the movement. This newspaper silence had, at the same time, protected politicians from criticism of their offences, omissive and commissive, against the suffrage cause. Mother and I—in the pre-militant days—called on the editor of one of the most important newspapers in the country, asking for the publication of a leading article drawing attention to a Woman Suffrage Bill. The editor, we found, was away; an associate received us. Mother put her request. 'I cannot do this without the editor's authority,' he told us, and went on to explain that in all his twenty years' association with this newspaper its practice had been, as far as possible, to ignore the woman suffrage question. But where peaceful means had failed, one act of militancy succeeded and never again was the cause ignored by that or any other newspaper. Weird rumours were heard now and again of newspaper potentates meeting in conclave and agreeing to be blind and dumb concerning the doings of the militants, but the rumours were false or else the agreements broke down.

Suffrage meetings, however large, were affairs of words, and the words of voteless women were not 'news'. But militancy was news, was current history, and, as such, must have place in the Press. 'Look at the newspapers!' wrote one veteran Suffragist, in her delight at seeing the silence embargo lifted. The Press became our best ally. That super-journalist, W. T. Stead, said to Mother: 'People always swear at you before they swear by you.'

Strangely enough, some who had rallied at the first militant deed thought that this one deed was enough and that militancy should end with its beginning. Representations were made to Mother accordingly. We differed from these counsellors. Too well we knew the shortness of political memory. To have made that one protest, suffered that one imprisonment, would have meant no lasting gain to the cause. All depended upon perseverance in the same path.

The General Election was drawing near. Our election policy must be declared. Voteless as we were, no direct part in the election could be ours, but women had long been active in elections as political-party hand-maidens, and their energies and abilities, so useful in helping men candidates, could be employed in helping their own cause. Our resources being still small, it was necessary to concentrate them at the most vital point. A Liberal leader's candidature in our own stronghold was our opportunity. Upon Mr. Winston Churchill's candidature for North-West Manchester our election policy was centred. The tactics most possible for us and most effectual at that early stage consisted in questioning Mr. Churchill at his election meetings. The dramatic quality of our doings made them good copy in the eyes of the popular Press. The more staid columns of the *Manchester Guardian* and *Manchester Courier* had perforce to treat our activities as news, and moreover they already saw the movement to be a far more significant thing than, as yet, did the Press and public outside Manchester. They best knew the Pankhurst name of old—that it stood for persistence in a determined course.

Annie Kenney by this time had joined our family circle, for Mother had invited her to do this, that she might be free to devote herself wholly to the movement.

Sylvia, home from her art studies for the holidays, entered the election fray and on one occasion at a meeting in a schoolroom was ejected from the platform where she had found a place, was locked in an ante-room, and had to make her escape through the window in

order to repeat her question later on. Adela and Harry came into action too. The General, as Mrs. Drummond was later to be known, developed at that time her powers of public speech, and on one and the same evening would appear at each of Mr. Churchill's meetings in turn to ask with resounding voice: 'What about votes for women?'

The news of the campaign travelled far beyond Manchester. We were not concerned with the party or with the candidate Mr. Churchill was opposing. Our object was simply to keep out the Government man. It is interesting to note, by the way, that Mr. Joynson Hicks, the Conservative candidate, played an important Parliamentary part in years to come in extending the vote to women.

Our manifesto in that first election campaign ran thus:

It has been decided to oppose Mr. Winston Churchill at the General Election, on the ground that he is a member of the Liberal Government which refuses to give Women the Vote.

The Government is anxious to have freedom for the Chinese in South Africa, but will not give political freedom to British Women.

'The Passive Resisters' are to have satisfaction, but women are not to have the votes which they have been demanding for some half a century.

The working women of the country who are earning starvation wages stand in urgent need of the vote. These helpless workers must have political power. It is all very well to promise cheap bread, but good wages are quite as important as cheap food and unless working women get votes, their wages and conditions of labour cannot be improved. The vote is the worker's best friend. Evidently, the Liberal Government cares nothing about the sufferings of underpaid working women, or else votes for women would have a foremost place on the Government programme.

Now that a Liberal Government is in power, the resolution in favour of Women's Franchise, recently carried by the National Liberal Federation, is ignored. In fact, the resolution was carried simply and solely in order to induce women to canvass for Liberal Candidates.

The Prime Minister, though he says he is personally 'in favour' of Women's Franchise, actually expects women to wait until after the General Election before knowing what the Liberal Government will do for them. Everyone knows what this means. If the Liberal leaders will not promise before the General Election to give votes to women, they will not do it after the Election.

Although Liberals profess to believe in political freedom the

long years in the wilderness, the exiles entered the land of promise. Suddenly I became conscious that something unusual was happening. There was a murmur below as though a light breeze had ruffled the great sea of humanity that filled the arena. All eyes were turned from the platform to a point in the boxes near me. I looked out and my eyes encountered, hanging from a box next but one to mine, a banner with the legend 'Votes for Women'. It was the signal of a new attack in the rear. Another Richmond was in the field. The Trojan host was in ruins, but the Amazons were upon us.

A Suffragette, Annie Kenney herself, was unaccountably present in Mr. John Burns' box, raising her question and unfurling her banner. No doubt the whole array of Cabinet Ministers thought, as Mr. Lloyd George had said at another meeting: 'The spectre has appeared!'

Of the militant campaign, the already mentioned Liberal author wrote: 'One cannot deny that it revealed quite brilliant generalship. . . . It may not have been magnificent, but it was war. . . . Who was the Moltke of this amazing campaign . . . it was Mrs. Pankhurst. . . .' And though he missed the secret of her nature and surmised 'fanaticism' and 'gloom' not really hers, he acknowledged that militancy had 'made the cause' which, having been 'an academic issue for half a century, became actual and vital, as it were in a night' . . . and that 'whatever we may think of her methods, we cannot doubt that they have shaken the walls of Westminster and made a breach through which future generations of women are destined to enter into undisputed citizenship'. Such words, written in 1907, are evidence that the Government's own supporters would gladly have seen them abandon their undignified and il-liberal resistance to our claim.

The Amazons were upon them—yet not fierce and fearsome-looking persons, but (and that was the worst of it from the Government's point of view) unaggressive and quite amiable-looking women. No one could feel any real sympathy with the Government side! It was always interesting to note the revulsion of feeling, and to hear the change of tone of the critics who had gained their opinion of the conflict at second-hand, when they discovered that the Suffragettes were not fanatics and viragos but just ordinary women who had made up their minds to get political fair play. Mother, especially, made converts in thousands, even before she had begun her speech, simply by her appearance and manner, which were so completely different from all expectation.

1906—Liberals Come to Power

*London—the Pethick-Lawrences—C.-B.'s advice to 'Pester People'—London Police Courts—Cockermouth By-election
—Clement's Inn—Huddersfield*

THE General Election was over. A Liberal Government, strongly entrenched, would govern the country for years to come. The vote must be wrested from the unwilling grasp of the Liberal leaders. The Liberal Government was in fact the enemy.

The Liberal leaders, with their Parliamentary rank and file, withdrew to Westminster, where they would be beyond our reach, except during their occasional sallies to the constituencies.

'We must get to work in London now,' I said to Mother. Then only, never before and never after, did I see her flinch. 'We can't afford it,' she said with the sharpness in her tone that betrayed her pain that our new movement should, after all, be checked, and perhaps utterly thwarted, for that reason. Money, foul money, again the hindrance! Millions of money, were they hers, would she have given for women's political ransom; she did not shrink from risking or giving all the money she had. Her only trouble was not having enough to give. She had stood financially behind all we had done, thus far, though she was in constant danger of losing her post and with it every penny. But to extend our work far from her Manchester base would be a costly matter. 'We can't afford it,' she repeated, almost fiercely, but to herself, rather than to me. 'Mother, the money will come,' I insisted. 'We cannot let these people escape us. Parliament is in London. Our fight must be made there too.' We couldn't afford it, she still said. She would risk and give everything she had, but she could not give what she had not.

Money should not defeat us, I resolved, with the daring faith of youth. We must carry the fight to London. A word with Annie Kenney, the unfailing! She would go. Two pounds remained in the

election fund. She would venture with that small sum and all our faith. That is how—historic fact—Annie Kenney went, with two pounds, to London. She would have gone with two pence.

I longed to go myself. The degree business delayed me. The final examination was not until June. After the stir at the University and their friendly settlement at the time of my imprisonment, it would be ungracious and, in the long run at any rate, be unwise to throw up my studies and the degree within a few months of the day. So I stayed in Manchester and Annie went to London.

Mother herself, however, was soon in London, spending as much time there as she could manage, returning, by trains at all hours, to Manchester to fill her official place. I did deputy for her when she was kept from her office, attended law lectures and looked to Suffrage things at home—but in thought I was in London, keeping in touch with all that was going on there.

Mother found that Annie had set things well in motion. She had gone on arrival to Chelsea, where Sylvia, then in her student days at South Kensington, was lodging. Sylvia gave Annie all the help she could. The next invaders from Manchester were General Flora Drummond, Teresa Billington and Jessie Kenney. Mother's sister Mary, already living in London, joined the band, as did Mrs. Martel, our Australian friend. Sylvia acted as honorary secretary, and the others spoke and organized. London members began to fill the ranks.

Mrs. Pankhurst, on the first day of the new Parliament, held the first W.S.P.U. demonstration in London and addressed her historic appeal to the Liberal Government to make with women a just peace founded on the vote.

The King's Speech embodying the programme of the new Government had made no mention of votes for women and Mother moved that the meeting should at once proceed to the House of Commons. The motion was carried and the audience followed Mother to the House. Admission was at first refused, but finally women, in groups of twenty at a time, were admitted to the lobby. Their representations to M.P.s proved fruitless. It was another argument for more stringent methods. This Caxton Hall meeting was the first overt sign that the W.S.P.U. had come to London to stay.

From that time the career of the Liberal Government was largely to consist in their vain opposition to the Suffragettes. This name, first applied to us by the *Daily Mail*, we happily adopted. There was a

spirit in it, a spring that we liked. Suffragists, we had called ourselves till then, but that name lacked the positive note implied by 'Suffragette'. Just 'want the vote' was the notion conveyed by the older appellation and, as a famous anecdote had it, 'the Suffragettes [hardening the 'g'] they mean to get it'.

It was a great day for the young militant movement, the W.S.P.U., when Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence joined it and on the same day became its honorary treasurer. News of the first militant protest had reached her in South Africa. She wanted to know what was behind this action. When Emmeline Pankhurst and Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence met in London, they felt the bond of a common inspiration. Their first long talk really determined that partnership which was to build a movement equal at all points to its historic enterprise. A Triumvirate was now in supreme control of the Women's Social and Political Union—to 'Mrs. Pankhurst and Christabel' was added Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence.

One of the many questions Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence asked Mrs. Pankhurst in their first and really decisive interview was whether money was needed for the work. 'The money will come,' was Mother's answer. Come it did, at the call of Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence. As honorary treasurer she was the envy of all other organizations of every kind. The income of the W.S.P.U. increased year by year, until, under our unique treasurer's wand, the Union was raising and spending at the rate of £200 a week on its nation-wide propaganda and campaign, and income and expenditure were still mounting with its ever-growing activity.

Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence's powers of organization were remarkable. She imagined fine projects and knew how to execute them. All this, with wisdom in counsel, eloquence on the platform, courage in the fight, and true friendship she brought into contribution. She had had experience as a social worker, during her association with Mrs. Hugh Price Hughes and the West London Mission, had with Miss Mary Neal formed and controlled the Esperance Girls' Club and like activities, which had developed the innate gifts she now devoted to the militant Suffrage movement. Her husband gave his sympathy and support to her decision to join the W.S.P.U. and stood by her from the beginning. Sympathy became active co-operation, and he put his scholarly attainments as a Cambridge man, a fourth wrangler, holder of many

other academic distinctions, and his experience of practical affairs, at the service of the women's cause. The official organ of the W.S.P.U., *Votes for Women*, an invaluable factor in our work, was jointly founded and edited by Mr. and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence. The harmonious collaboration with them lasted from 1906 until, on an issue of policy, it came to an end, leaving grateful recollection of their generous contribution to the coming victory, and of six years' advance together towards the eventual goal.

No Woman Suffrage Bill was introduced in this first session of the new Parliament by any private member, as no one sufficiently sympathetic gained a place for its discussion, but Mr. Keir Hardie was able to move a resolution, which would have enabled at least an expression of House of Commons opinion. An opponent, a Liberal M.P., was busily 'talking-out' the resolution to prevent a division. The time limit was all but reached when Suffragettes in the Ladies' Gallery, stirred by the memory of former talking-out, called 'Divide, divide', and Votes for Women banners were waved through the cage bars.

How truly those bars of the Ladies' Gallery in the House of Commons symbolized the political position of women! Now that women vote, the Ladies' Gallery is a cage no longer.

Amid the hubbub, the fatal hour struck and the House rose. Criticism was made that silence in the Ladies' Gallery would—perhaps—have meant the Speaker's acceptance of the closure and a favourable vote of the House. But the Speaker's acceptance of the closure was the most unlikely of all things, judging by the ruling that in later time blocked a far more substantial woman suffrage motion. Also, a favourable vote of the House, even if prevented on that occasion, was recorded and repeated in future sessions and completely ignored by the Government.

The Prime Minister, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, soon afterwards admitted that the Government had no intention of giving women the vote. Patience was required, said he, when he received a deputation representing all the Suffrage Societies, ours included, but 'go on pestering people', he also advised. We had indeed been obliged to pester him, more than once, before he would consent to receive that deputation! Suffragettes had stood upon the doorstep of 10 Downing Street, claiming to be received. General Flora Drummond,



Mrs. Pankhurst speaking in Trafalgar Square. *Front row:* Frank Smith, L.C.C., Mrs. Wolstenholme Elmy, Keir Hardie and Mrs. Martell



Christabel Pankhurst examining Mr. Lloyd George at Bow Street, October 1908



Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence leaving Holloway Prison

by a happy accident, pressed a knob she thought a bell, the door opened, and she rushed through and nearly reached the Cabinet room. She and Annie were arrested, though not prosecuted. After that, and a request by the non-militants, a deputation was received. Veterans of forty years' service, who had heard John Stuart Mill plead their cause in Parliament and had seen the first Woman Suffrage Bill pass its second reading in 1870, pleaded that at last women should have the vote. University graduates, working women, homekeepers, women of all political views supported the claim. Mrs. Pankhurst affirmed that she and her militants cared so deeply for the enfranchisement of women that they were ready to give 'life itself or, what is perhaps even harder, the means by which we live'. She spoke with truth and her words were more than an avowal of intention, they were a prophecy. 'Patience' was hard counsel to receive in reply to all this.

The Prime Minister declared himself personally friendly to votes for women, but powerless to overcome the opposition of some members of his Cabinet. 'We are not satisfied,' ringingly declared Annie Kenney. We militants saw in the Prime Minister's reply only one good feature—his parting counsel: 'Go on pestering people!'

Pestered at a public meeting by the Suffragettes soon after the Prime Minister's utterance, Mr. Lloyd George, also a professing supporter, exclaimed: 'Why don't they go for their enemies? Why don't they go for their greatest enemy!' 'Asquith, Asquith!' was the shout that rose from the audience. Mr. Asquith, then Chancellor of the Exchequer and second in command to the Prime Minister, was regarded as the chief of the anti-Suffrage element in the Cabinet. We had assuredly no intention of showing him special indulgence! He was requested to receive a deputation. He refused. Undeterred, a deputation of thirty women, carrying banners, went to his residence in Cavendish Square. Police barred their way. A battle followed. The leader, Annie Kenney, was arrested and with her Mrs. Sparborough and Teresa Billington. Sentences were longer this time—six weeks and two months (though this was later halved). The alternative was to be bound over for a year, a thing to which no militant could conscientiously agree.

Militancy had now begun in London. The first prisoners for the vote were in Holloway Gaol.

My final examination was approaching and that meant release or London and the work there. Panic prompted concentration and I withdrew from human society to that of my books. When the result came out I found that I was bracketed with one other at the top of the examination list.

Mother came to see my degree conferred and we thought of Father, his Owens College days, his interest in the University and his thoughts about my taking to law.

London next! Characteristically, as it seemed, all our people, more or less, were in the Police Court when I arrived—either as prisoners or as onlookers.

Our Union flourished and all was high promise of coming victory. Prison and prisoners, yes, but the first shock and odium of militancy had passed, and the grim, harsh days of the later coercion were yet in the future. We were ready for all, if it must come—but it might not come if the Liberal Government were liberal in deed and in truth as well as in name.

All the same, that London trial was a painful thing. It was only the second time I had ever been in a Police Court. The first time was for my own trial. There, in the dock, were our women, facing prison. Soon they were in the prison van, locked each in a little cramped cell, and shaken and rattled to Holloway Gaol.

This fresh imprisonment, like every other, brought strenuous if welcome tasks for those outside. Sympathy with the prisoners and indignation with the Government drew more women into our ranks. Meetings multiplied, correspondence increased, so that those who wanted to know why we did these things might be informed. Instantly, then, into the saddle, reins in hand! How thankful I was to be all of me in London instead of having my mind there and my body in Manchester!

Surveying the London work as I found it, I considered that in one sense it was too exclusively dependent for its demonstrations upon the women of the East End. The East End women were more used to turning out in numbers, for many of them had done so in connection with Labour demonstrations, and at the very beginning of our London campaign it was natural for our organizers to rely mainly upon them. It was, however, the right and duty of women more fortunately placed to do their share, and the larger share, in the fight for the vote which might be, whatever our hopes to the contrary, long and hard. Besides,

critical murmurs of 'stage army' were being, quite unjustly, made by Members of Parliament about the East End contingents, and it was evident that the House of Commons, and even its Labour members, were more impressed by the demonstrations of the feminine bourgeoisie than of the feminine proletariat. My democratic principles and instincts made me want a movement based on no class distinctions, and including not mainly the working class but women of all classes.

No! We must show no respect of persons. An individual gift for command and organization, united with freedom from domestic and other circumstances, gave the title to manage departments of the work. Consequently it was sometimes found in our W.S.P.U. that directions would be given by a junior in age to seniors, or by one of less to those of more social consequence. But true equality reigned with us between women of every class. All belonged to the aristocracy of the Suffragettes. The recollection that remains with those who took part in the movement is that life in those days was a big and a fine thing.

Campaigns in London were increasing our membership by enabling us to reach the women whose interest had been roused by the militant action of the past months. The weekly Hyde Park meetings near the Reformer's Tree were a great recruiting ground. In those days audiences in Hyde Park were larger and more representative than they would perhaps be now, when the motor-car and bus carry folk farther away. Some of our best members were found at the Hyde Park meetings. It was a great thing to notice the faces in every audience and to enlist in our ranks the women of promise. There would be a light in the eye, a set of the mouth and an expression of the face! 'She is one of ours: she has the makings in her.' Our movement was largely built of personal initiative and responsibility. Especially in the early days, every individual adherent counted for much.

A great discovery was Mrs. Tuke, who for the longer part of the W.S.P.U.'s existence was honorary secretary. Mr. and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence had met and greatly liked her on their homeward voyage from South Africa, whence she was returning after the death out there of her husband, a young Army officer. Mrs Pethick-Lawrence invited her to luncheon, I being also a guest. She came, still in mourning, gentle and beautiful, the last woman in the world, it might have been supposed, to join a militant movement. Yet when, after luncheon, I remarked: 'I must go now and chalk pavements for a meeting' (for

leaders were still at the chalking stage), what did she say but 'I'll come and chalk pavements too!' I knew, then, that she was of the right stuff, and all the more as she did her chalking with such a will, and laughed when a rude errand boy called her youthful self 'You old fool!' From that day onward she was one of us.

The first by-election at which our anti-Government policy became generally understood was at Cockermouth. I went there to prepare for the campaign. Two other speakers, Teresa Billington and Mrs. Coates Hansen, were to follow. We knew not a soul in the whole constituency. However, the hotel people, the newspaper people, the police and everyone else, seemed very glad of a visit from the Suffragettes. I announced an open-air meeting, hired a lorry as platform and three chairs, one for each speaker, and awaited the other two. A telegram: they could not come! Nothing for it, then, but a meeting with one speaker, three chairs and an audience. A large crowd was waiting. I apologized for the absence of my colleagues, was chairman and speaker in one, and begged them all, with reasons why, to vote against the Government. It was the most friendly audience, we all enjoyed the evening, and a meeting was announced for the morrow. Came the morrow and another telegram: still the other two could not arrive. Again three chairs, one speaker and much apology, and again the same friendly atmosphere. Another meeting with all three speakers was announced. The third day came and again the other two telegraphed: unable to come. This time when I joined my three chairs on the platform, everyone, the speaker, too, laughed long and loud. But we had a very pleasant meeting. The same thing happened for what seemed countless evenings, while in the daytime I was in other parts of the constituency. But at last the other speakers really came and we had a great campaign. These Cumberland people were all our friends. Most of them did what we asked, voted against the Government and kept the Liberal out, while even the others showed no rancour.

There were three candidates in the field, Liberal, Conservative, and Labour, but we remained entirely and scrupulously independent of them all and their parties. We had started and were keeping the W.S.P.U. free of all political allegiance and it seemed that our independence of party stirred real indignation in some political quarters. The Conservatives were, perhaps, still serenely confident that their

women would continue to help them, vote or no vote, but the Liberals were already feeling disturbed, and many Labour men were distinctly displeased that a women's union should, at the by-elections, oppose Liberal candidates without supporting Labour. Yet we were simply pursuing that course of political independence which they thought best for themselves. It is evident that had we supported either the Labour or Conservative candidates we should have been reckoned simply as appendages of the Conservative or the Labour Party and the 'votes for women' issue would have been dangerously obscured. Also, we should, by working for any one party, have alienated women whose preference was for one or other of the remaining parties. As it was, we could rally women of all three parties and women of no party, and unite them as one independent force. We could not let the 'votes for women' movement be a frill on the sleeve of any political party.

Political independence of party was, it may here be said, the cause of a difference of view between Mother and myself, on the one hand, as the leaders of the W.S.P.U. who determined its policy, and the two younger daughters, who would have preferred to associate the W.S.P.U. with the Labour Party. This was a vital difference of policy, the more practically difficult because of their name and relationship. 'These things must be,' doubtless, but would it were otherwise! The inevitable outcome was an ultimate political parting of the ways between those who stood for political independence of all parties and those who did not. This was only fair to W.S.P.U. members outside our family; for a policy divided against itself cannot succeed. Mother and I were ever insistent that W.S.P.U. members should accept our policy and maintain a united front, and it would have been unjust to them, and illogical favouritism, to make an exception in the case of relatives—though perhaps we may have been justly chargeable with having shown too long a little partiality, out of a natural desire to maintain family peace.

The unfortunate experience of the Women's Liberal Federation was sufficient warning against making our W.S.P.U. an ally of any party. The Women's Liberal Federation had for years rendered immeasurable service to the Liberal Party, but though individually many Liberals would gladly have seen women enfranchised, the Liberal leaders had always placed other things first. The same was the case with the Conservative Party. Already there were some Labourists

saying that other things must be dealt with before women got the vote. It was humanly natural that they, as men, should say so. Our business as women was to recognize this and act accordingly.

While we highly appreciated the help given by individual M.P.s in their personal capacity, we did not believe that this support ought to be rewarded by support to their Party as a whole. The political parties did not like this independence but we did not want them to like it. We wanted their wish for the political alliance of women to kindle in them an effectual and decisive interest in our getting the vote!

The autumn of 1906 saw us installed in the office at Clement's Inn, which for the next six years was to be our stronghold. Adjacent to Fleet Street, it was highly convenient for the newspapers who were ever interested in the militant movement.

Never lose your temper with the Press or the public is a major rule of political life. We never made that mistake. We liked the public, we even liked the Press. At any rate the journalists who interviewed us or reported our meetings seemed to us to be quite sympathetic and we suspected that their copy was touched up in newspaper offices by those who had no first-hand knowledge of the movement, and that they themselves were perhaps under instruction 'not to encourage it'. Yet even exaggerated and distorted reports, which made us seem more terrible than we really were, told the world this much—that we wanted the vote and were resolved to get it.

The sinews of war were coming in. Our honorary treasurer was unrivalled in her rare courage to ask others to give, as well as to give herself, and our campaign fund mounted phenomenally. This was financial militancy, which to the very last the Government, even by the threat to proceed against our individual subscribers, could not defeat. The contributors to the W.S.P.U. funds included most of the surviving suffrage pioneers of the earliest days. Some of the very richest women in the country were also among the contributors. Yet the W.S.P.U. workers themselves received very little. None were paid, apart from the clerical staff, unless they were taking definite organizing responsibility. Speakers were not paid and there was no pay for militant action. No one, therefore, was in the movement for personal advantage. The funds were mainly spent on rent and the other expenses of the campaign, printing and the like. Not the least generous

of our subscribers were in fact our organizers, who cheerfully and self-regardlessly received so little money and gave so great service.

Parliament reassembled in the autumn of 1906. The militants were there to make to the Prime Minister their demand for the vote. Received instead by his spokesman, they were given a negative reply, and on making speeches of protest they were ejected from the building and several—Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, Mrs. How-Martyn, Annie Kenney, Teresa Billington, Mary Gawthorpe, Sylvia, Adela, and last, but far from least, Mrs. Cobden Sanderson, were sent to prison. The daughter of Richard Cobden imprisoned by a Liberal Government! This was the strongest evidence of their real illiberalism. Had other women of Liberal name and fame followed the fine example of Cobden's daughter, the Government could have been driven to surrender.

As it was, her action, and the Government's treatment of her, decided a great number of women to join us. The arrests had, for the time, thinned our working force, but we who were outside were resolved not to waste the hour of opportunity. A manifesto was sent far and wide, declaring the facts and calling on women to join us. The General brought out her typewriter and worked night and day. Mrs. Despard and Mrs. Tuke came to the office daily. Jessie Kenney plunged into the work. A stranger, Miss Nichols, who lived in Green Street—that was all we knew about her—arrived with a typewriter and became instantly one of us. Alas, we gained her and learned her great quality only to lose her, for she fell ill and died of pneumonia. This was the first grief the movement had brought me. At that time many of our most valuable adherents joined us and the tide flowed strongly with us. Men were stirred to new sympathy. Mr. Pethick-Lawrence, roused by his wife's arrest, suggested a great poster of explanation to the public and of protest against the Government's treatment of the women, which was put on the hoardings of London, and he entered upon the valuable self-imposed task of strengthening the business side of the movement. Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence's whole family stood by her. Her sister helped the Union, her brother-in-law formed the Men's League for Woman Suffrage which, with the later Men's Political Union, questioned Cabinet Ministers and gave great aid to the cause. Mrs. Cobden Sanderson, with her two sisters, Mrs. Cobden Unwin and Mrs. Cobden Sickert, were three graces indeed, and gave one a retrospective liking for Cobden *père*—the two at liberty were in

complete solidarity with their imprisoned sister. Her husband, distressed for, yet proud of her, would desert his Doves Press and come to our office to cheer us on. Certainly our prisoners' mothers and fathers, husbands and children were in most cases very forgiving to us and very loyal to the prisoners. Some of our prisoners, it is true, faced the added ordeal of family vexation, at any rate for a time. Generally, however, their relatives were eventually appeased.

Another important by-election occurred in Huddersfield, where Mother appealed so effectively to the electors to vote against the Government that had imprisoned Cobden's daughter that Cobden's daughter and her fellow prisoners were released in the middle of their sentence. When Cobden's daughter and the others appeared in the constituency public enthusiasm reached its height. In spite of the Government candidate's poster of appeal to the men of Huddersfield: 'Don't be misled by Socialists, Suffragettes and Tories', the Government were deservedly defeated. Our by-election policy was doubly advantageous. It often turned the scale against the Government and thus helped to wear down their resistance to woman suffrage, and it gave the best opportunity for educational propaganda, because the public were caught at a moment when they were especially interested in political matters. Defeated Liberal candidates were able to report to the Cabinet the adverse influence of the Suffragettes and even those elected could give true forewarning of the ultimate ill effect upon the Liberal cause of refusing votes to women.

Direct communication with Cabinet Ministers we ourselves maintained by visiting their meetings. Immediately a meeting was announced in any part of the country, tickets were procured and our local members, often reinforced from London, prepared to question the Cabinet Minister concerned—and to take the consequence, however dangerous.

I remember Mr. Asquith's meeting in a certain city. The expanding work of the Union, with the speaking and organization which it threw upon me, had sometimes kept me from such expeditions. But I felt I must see for myself how our women were now faring on these missions. Despite all precautions, a goodly number of us were present, unknown to those in charge of the meeting. Mr. Asquith appeared; in due course began to speak. Then it came: 'Votes for Women!' Roar of

anger—or excitement—from that multitude of men! Asquith silent. Stewards and other men rush at the woman, drag her from her vantage point, and eject her. The rest of us sit motionless—or we shall be thrown out before due time. Noise gives way to a sort of exhausted silence. The enthusiasm has gone out of the meeting. It is all very flat. Mr. Asquith starts again, says something that simply invites the comment ‘But you don’t give women the vote!’ Shouts from the massed men, half angry, and half enjoying the thrill of a row. Wondering, no doubt, what the eminent speaker may say afterwards if they refrain, the stewards are zealous in ejecting this second questioner, and some rougher elements in the audience add to the violence of the act. One after another, our women make their protest—and some of their remarks on votes for women are particularly apt!

Mr. Asquith was losing his calm. He did not like it and liked it less and less. I watched him closely. As a speaker already of some experience, I could not help criticizing his attitude towards interjections and those who made them. How would Mr. Asquith have liked some of our experiences? Mice, poor little creatures, live and dead, flung at us, tomatoes, flour, stones, often concerted and continuous shouting and stamping. Sometimes at the open-air meetings we were in positive danger through the roughness of gangs of disturbers and the consequent surging of the crowds. The bad example of the Government in ejecting women from their meetings, and arresting women for asking to be received in deputation, was mainly, if not entirely, responsible for such rowdyism.

Yet we would never have interrupters turned out: we renounced absolutely the use of physical force in dealing with opponents at our meetings. A political hothouse plant, this Asquith! Obstinate, not strong! He could not stand fire!

That meeting was my opportunity of taking the measure of the opponent with whom we had to wage eight years of warfare, halted only by the world war itself.

When all our women had made their challenge and been thrown out, and Mr. Asquith seemed near to his peroration, I felt that I had heard enough but that he must hear some more. So with the strongest and deepest lung- and voice-power, usually reserved for our very largest Hyde Park meetings, I said my say and continued to do so for as long as that strength, which determination lends, enabled me to cling to my seat and delay the process of ejection.

When Mr. Asquith spoke in another city Mother herself had a memorable experience. It was not really our plan that she, as queen of the movement, should attend Cabinet Ministers' meetings. That was too much honour for them! She, therefore, was to address a big rival demonstration in the open air, while a number of our members interrupted Mr. Asquith at the meeting. A leading Liberal woman, when Mother remarked that women would certainly be thrown out of the meeting for questioning Mr. Asquith, replied that such a thing could not happen in that city, where women had done so much for the Liberal Party. Mother thereupon decided to put the matter to the proof and, accompanied by this trustful Liberal woman, entered the meeting and seated herself in the front row of a section set apart for the wives and daughters of local Liberal leaders. Mother sat silently until Mr. Asquith had finished his discourse. Then she rose and told the chairman that she would like to put a question to Mr. Asquith. Hesitancy on the platform! So she at once inquired whether Mr. Asquith did not think that women had a right to influence the government of the country through the vote. The stewards seized her by the arms and shoulders and pushed and dragged her from the hall.

That Liberal woman resigned from the Women's Liberal Association and joined the W.S.P.U.

1907—Parliament

*The Women's Parliament—Work at Clement's Inn—The
Dickinson Bill—Mrs. Pankhurst no longer Registrar—
The Women's Freedom League*

A WOMEN'S PARLIAMENT, as we called it, began our campaign for 1907. This followed a large procession, convened and marshalled by the non-militants, in which, by their friendly invitation, we also had a part. This procession and the big meeting that ensued did not obtain the hoped-for response from the Government.

Our Women's Parliament was therefore more than a parley. It was the first of many such Parliaments held in the Caxton Hall, which, as the nearest available rallying point to the House of Commons, we made the base of operations. Enfranchised women may yet, as the militant movement takes its place in history, make pilgrimage to the Caxton Hall. If walls could give back today their record of past words and emotions, much would the walls of Caxton Hall reveal!

The Men's Parliament—we could not call it ours, since we had no share in its election—began its new Session on the same day, and we sat waiting to know if the Government had included votes for women in the Session's programme. Bad news arrived. Action was imperative!

Those Women's Parliaments were an ordeal. The tension, as the deputations went out to fight their way among the crowds and against the resistance of police, was painful indeed. I was in the first advance of 1907. At other times I was on the platform to see others go and await the news—whether they were possibly admitted or probably repulsed—to receive them as they came back, battered and bruised, to see them return to the struggle. This was almost worse than being with them in the fray. To be chairman or speaker at one of these Women's Parliaments was among the most testing experiences of the movement.

The first deputation was led by Mrs. Despard. Gallant as always, she marched erect and determined, followed by a train of others, to Parliament Square.

The House of Commons was guarded by rows of police who resisted the women's advance. A long struggle followed, for the women would not abandon the attempt to reach their goal. Again and again, through the interminable afternoon and evening, this went on. Exhausted, coats rent, hats torn from their heads, the women would return to Caxton Hall for a rest and then set out again to renew the struggle. They would never yield, weary, even hurt as they were. Superior physical force was on the Government's side, but they would show that their will could not be shaken, nor their spirit broken.

Fifteen women actually got through the police guard, made a rush into the House and began to hold a meeting in the lobby, only to be violently ejected and arrested. Other women in their hundreds made the same attempt, till the Square had been forcibly cleared and some sixty arrests had been made.

In the Court, next morning, I was tried first, as having organized the proceedings. I maintained that the Government were responsible for the disorder, by their denial of political justice, and that their orders to the police had resulted in violence to a perfectly peaceful deputation, bent on a lawful mission, that of petitioning the Prime Minister whom they could not, being voteless, approach through elected Parliamentary representatives. The magistrate, Mr. Curtis Bennett, declared that 'these disorderly scenes must be stopped'. I quite agreed, but said that depended not upon women but upon the Government. 'There can be no going back for us,' I said, 'and more will happen if we do not get the vote which is our right.'

As we again declined on principle to pay fines, imprisonment followed, of seven days for some, of three weeks for Mrs. Despard, Sylvia and some others, of two weeks for myself and some more. For once, we were placed in the first division. This meant wearing our own clothes, being supplied, if we wished, with meals from outside, with newspapers, books, and facilities for pursuing our professions or trades. Accordingly, I summoned my secretary, but even with first division gilt on the bars, the fact of imprisonment is inimical to any initiative work. One could not have led from prison, in the sense of planning and directing action, as one could lead from exile. Exile simply meant long-distance control and in some respects gave advantage as well as disadvantage. Prison is quite another matter.

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The New Year, 1907, had found the Women's Social and Political Union organized for the march to victory: with a growing membership, a fine band of organizers and speakers, funds which expanded to meet the expanding needs of the movement, a headquarters well staffed and equipped, new offices opening and new branches forming outside London. Throughout the year we went on deepening foundations and enlarging and strengthening the fabric of the Union. The weekly 'at homes', which began in our office and overflowed it, were transferred to the Portman Rooms and overflowed them, and then every Monday filled the large Queen's Hall, were due to the initiative of Mrs. Tuke. 'People ought to know you, they don't realize what Mrs. Pankhurst and the rest of you are like,' she declared. These gatherings became an invaluable part of our programme. There we explained past actions and announced those to come, there we dispelled misunderstandings, won new members, and called for service, thence we sent our messages to the Government. Now, as I sit in the Queen's Hall at some concert, I go back in memory and see again Mother speaking and the hall filled with women, alive, individualized and yet united in devotion to the great cause.

The spirit of the movement was wonderful. It was joyous and grave at the same time. Self seemed to be laid down as the women joined us. Loyalty, that greatest of the virtues, was the keynote of the movement—first to the cause, then to those who were leading, and member to member. Courage came next, not simply physical courage, though so much of that was present, but still more the moral courage to endure ridicule and misunderstandings and harsh criticism and ostracism. There was a touch of the *impersonal* in the movement that made for its strength and dignity. Humour characterized it, too, in that our militant women were like the British soldier who knows how to joke and smile amid his fighting and trials.

If only the Liberal leaders had also been, like the Suffragettes, gifted with a sense of humour!

Clement's Inn, our headquarters, was a hive seething with activity. Mother and Mrs. Tuke had their honorary secretaries' office. Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence and her assistant, Mrs. Sanders, treasured the money in their offices, the Pethick-Lawrences jointly edited *Votes for Women*. The large general office housed Miss Kerr and a battalion of secretaries and typists, with place for voluntary workers and a corner for tea. My own office adjoined it and next to this was Jessie Kenney's office, where,

with the aid of Miss Hambling, plans for pestering Cabinet Ministers were laid and the most diversified measures were taken. Press-cuttings and reference books were housed beyond. General Flora Drummond's office was full of movement. As department was added to department, Clement's Inn seemed always to have one more room to offer. And so on, daily, weekly, monthly, yearly! All the time, watching, attacking, defending, moving and counter-moving! It was indeed a question of 'I shall not cease from mental fight'. Yet how glorious those Suffragette days were! To lose the personal in a great impersonal is to live!

The policy of opposing Government by-election candidates until women should be granted the vote became after 1907 a still more prominent part of our campaign. Mother, aided by Mrs. Massy, Mrs. Martel, the Brackenbury sisters and other of our speakers, went from by-election to by-election, urging electors to vote against the Government, unless and until they granted women the vote. Mother might have been a candidate herself, so far as work went—indeed hers was a harder task, for whereas the candidates fought only their own campaign, she electrified every constituency in turn. In the earlier days, she would perhaps find indifference or even hostility. The first meeting would change all that—the Press, the public, would be won by her courage in face of hostile shouting and even of missiles at times, and before they knew it it would be, 'We glory in your pluck,' and the newspaper correspondents would be telegraphing reports of the public enthusiasm for Mrs. Pankhurst, her helpers, and her cause.

Mother, although so much concentrated upon her chosen task, was versatile and could always meet persons of other interests on their own ground. She kept her eyes and ears open to ideas and doings in many fields, the dwellers therein being ever surprised and charmed that this 'woman of one idea' was interested and informed as to their special subjects. After all, to understand one thing very well and deeply is to have intercommunication with all others, for in their heights and depths all great subjects are related; their roots intertwine, their branches interlace. Mrs. Pankhurst, if only by her political gifts and experience, had the freedom of many intellectual cities! Many persons would have known this of her, but for the extreme social reserve imposed upon her, as upon us all, by the exigencies of militant policy. A certain mystery enhanced the reputation of the militants for inflexible purpose. Mother's gentleness and charm, had they known it too well, might have misled the opponents as to the steel strength of

her determination to fight to the end for women and their right to vote.

Great stir was made by the Women's Parliament and much sympathy aroused. Some Members of Parliament, who had witnessed the treatment of women outside the House of Commons, put questions of protest and criticism to the Government.

In this favourable atmosphere Mr. (afterwards Sir Willoughby) Dickinson, having gained in the ballot a place for the second reading of a Bill, decided to introduce a Bill to give votes to women on the same terms as men.

This was fortunate for us. It was still more fortunate for the Government, for a golden opportunity was theirs to let Mr. Dickinson's Bill pass the second reading and then adopt it and carry it through its final stages into law. This would avert further militancy and bring forty years of patient pleading to a happy end.

The Government's decision was still unknown, the fate of the Women's Enfranchisement Bill was still in the balance, when Mother received a letter of great importance to her. This letter concerned the official position she had held ever since she had been widowed. The letter was from the Registrar-General. Someone, he said, had complained—who the complainant was she did not know—that her activities in the direction of political agitation were exercised in a manner and to an extent that were detrimental to the proper performance of her duties as Registrar of Births and Deaths.

Mother had never been to prison. No charge had been made against her; she had never been arrested. Her personal activities had been exclusively non-militant, because, for the sake of her youngest child Harry, still a schoolboy, she did not feel justified, if she could avoid it, in risking to that extent the loss of her income and her home. The deputy-registrar was Aunt Mary, who was on duty in Mother's absence, but Mother, with her gift of being, as it were, everywhere at once, used to take the most extraordinary measures to get back, by night trains, in order to be in her office during the hours officially appointed for her attendance. No shadow of complaint had ever reached her, from any member of the public.

The Registrar-General proceeded in his letter to say that he himself had noticed in the public Press reports of the prominent part

Mother had taken in political meetings, not only in and near Manchester, but in places as distant as London and Aberdeen, and, independently of the letter of complaint referred to, he had himself felt grave doubts as to whether the amount of time and energy she was devoting to these matters was compatible with the personal attention to her duties and responsibilities as Registrar, which he was bound to require of her.

The final words of this letter intimated that although the Registrar-General was ready to give full consideration to any explanation Mother might wish to offer, he 'warned' her in her 'own interest' that her association with public affairs, as reported in the Press, appeared to him already to have exceeded those reasonable limits that are permissible to a person holding an official appointment.

Mother was thus threatened with the loss of her post, its income, and also the pension for her later years which went with it. Her post, owing to developments in the district, promised to become one of the most financially remunerative Registrarships in the whole country.

Although no publicity at that stage could be given to the matter, Mother might have been wise to seek some outside advice. In personal matters she was extremely reserved, but this was a matter more than personal. She was summoned to choose between abandoning her work for the vote or relinquishing her post. Of course, she would be released from the dilemma if the Women's Enfranchisement Bill were carried, and all other women who would otherwise suffer, for the sake of the vote, would be spared also.

Mother waited three days—until the second reading of the Women's Enfranchisement Bill. The Bill was talked out by a supporter of the Government!

Mother resigned her post.

The Registrar-General 'with regret' accepted her resignation.

The destruction of the Women's Enfranchisement Bill and the deplorable method of 'talking-out' employed for its destruction roused a natural indignation. Again, as in 1905, and in 1906, the Government, who could have made a clear way for the Bill to be carried, had chosen war with women. They forgot that they had to deal with the descendants of men and women who had in past generations striven for political and constitutional liberty.



Mrs. Drummond, Mrs. Pankhurst and Christabel being arrested
by Inspector Jarvis



Lady Constance Lytton, Annie Kenney, Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, Christabel Pankhurst, Sylvia Pankhurst

Viscountess Harberton, a Suffragist of many years' standing, volunteered to lead the deputation of petition and protest. Hundreds followed her. She left the Caxton Hall to find a strong force of police at the very doors. Undismayed, she pressed on, the others with her, and, as last time, a struggle raged for hours, the women trying again and again to make a way through the police who were guarding the Government against their presence.

An internal problem of management arose at this point¹ which was solved with results which were all to the good in the end, because two organizations existed where only one had been before. The W.S.P.U. had been founded and led by Mother and myself, upon our own initiative and responsibility. Nobody asked us to do it. We thought we saw a need and we met that need, according to our best judgment and ability. We shaped the policy of the W.S.P.U. We resolved upon and adopted militancy. Leaders, in fact, from the very beginning, though we ourselves did not introduce the title, we had continued to lead. There had never been a W.S.P.U. committee in the ordinary sense nor an annual conference to elect it. We went ahead and the others with us. Nothing could be happier and nothing more effective. However, one day in 1906, in the full swing of the work in London, one of our people said to me: 'Don't you think we ought to have a constitution now and hold an annual conference and let the members elect the committee?' I was astonished by the suggestion. The idea of diverting attention from the cause, to constitution-making, conference-holding, and committee-electing, struck me as incongruous. Besides, I had in my earliest suffrage experience acquired a distaste for committees in connection with what should be a temporary campaign for a specific object. By instinct and reason, I was apprehensive of the entrance of 'politics' into our Union—with the running of candidate against candidate for the committee. Why change the existing *regime*! Unity, harmony, enthusiasm, earnestness, and happiness prevailed in our ranks. No one was obliged to join the W.S.P.U. or to stay in it, if she did not so wish. No one need subscribe to its funds or share in its work, still less need anyone share in militancy, save of her own free will. 'Don't you trust the members?' I was asked. Of course I trusted our splendid members, I said. What I might well have said was: 'And I hope that they trust Mother and me to lead them better than a committee.'

¹ Also in October 1907 the first issue of the paper *Votes for Women* was published.

However, stung by the suggestion that I did not trust our brave and devoted members, I assented, against my instincts and judgment, to the change suggested and somehow, by common consent, we glided into it.

The first annual conference was held, the obvious committee was elected—all went on as before. Then as election day, that is to say, the date of the second annual conference, approached, a certain unrest was felt, electioneering began, rumours ran concerning who would be re-elected to the committee and who would not. Mrs. Pankhurst and Christabel would win the election, of course, and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, the inimitable treasurer, too, but some, if not all, of our original choice and appointment might be replaced by others of a different point of view! Canvassing, with the inevitable comparison of merits, was in danger of distracting members from the supreme object of overcoming the resistance of Party politicians to the enfranchisement of women. It was as though in the midst of a battle the Army had begun to vote upon who should command it, and what the strategy should be. Mother and I were plainly told by Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence that she had come into the movement because she had confidence in us and our policy, and that unless we continued to lead, she must reconsider her position. Mother and I were not the 'born autocrats' we have been reported to be. We had no love of power for the sake of power. The vote for women was all we wanted and when the vote was won we did not cling to leadership. Perhaps it would have been better for the women if Mother herself had done so! As long as the fight for the vote was in progress, definite leadership was certainly needed, and when Mother and I were fully convinced that this was in jeopardy, we were prepared to be, temporarily, 'complete autocrats'.

Mother accordingly summoned a special meeting of members in Essex Hall to consider a matter of grave importance. She informed this meeting that in view of developments to which she need not more plainly allude, she had decided for the good of the movement that the second annual conference of the W.S.P.U. should not be held. Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence briefly expressed her agreement with Mrs. Pankhurst. One of those present asked whether this meant that there would be no more conferences and elections of committee. I said that it did. Finally, Mother invited all who were ready to follow her, as their leader from the beginning, to do so still, and suggested that any who

were not in sympathy with her decision should form an organization of their own. This they did and thus there were two militant organizations instead of one, and all ended happily.

The W.S.P.U. was under Mrs. Pankhurst's banner. The Women's Freedom League was under the banner of Mrs. Despard, Mrs. Billington-Greig, Mrs. How-Martyn, Mrs. Holmes, and others. The rippled waters were soon calm and each of the two organizations had its sphere of operation in the women's war.

The W.S.P.U. was organized and led in much the same way as the Salvation Army under General Booth. Our organizers and members found our leadership perfectly compatible with their own freedom to develop their activities, and indeed they often astonished themselves and their friends by their ability and initiative. They knew 'where they were' and to whom they were accountable.

Our watchword was really 'Come on!' We asked them to do nothing we had not done, or were not prepared to do, ourselves. The situation which resulted in the forming of the Women's Freedom League meant distress at the time, and yet it need not have done so, if all concerned had then seen it for what it really was—a hiving off of the Suffragette swarm. As an army has different regiments, so may a movement, and all the woman suffrage societies, with their different leaders and different methods, were united in aim.

The internal situation adjusted, all thoughts and energies were again concentrated entirely on the main issue. Far from regretting the existence of a new militant society, we wished that all the other woman suffrage societies would turn militant. Had the National Union of Woman Suffrage Societies taken to militancy, our joy and thankfulness would have been beyond words. If Mrs. Fawcett and Mother had stood together at the door of the House of Commons, it might have opened. The Prime Minister could not easily have fought both wings of the women's movement.

One day the non-militants gave a dinner to our prisoners. We highly appreciated this act of solidarity and moral support. Had they shared our fare in prison, it would have meant still more.

I have lately been touched by learning that Mrs. Fawcett did consider with earnestness whether she should become militant, though she decided to the contrary, on the ground that the W.S.P.U. was autocratically managed and was developing a stronger militancy. Had we known of this at the time, we should have said that a greater

political effect would have been produced by the existence of another militant society, independent of ours, and pursuing its own policy.

As to leadership, this, as I see it, is not a tyranny, but rather a task resembling that of the conductor of an orchestra. I cannot see and hear an orchestra at work, each player delighting in his own part and the intermingling parts of all the rest, and in the unanimous response to the conductor's beat, without thinking of our W.S.P.U. . . .

1908—Growing Activity

Aberdeen, Mid-Devon and Leeds Elections—Second Women's Parliament—First Albert Hall Meeting—Peckham Election—Mr. Churchill's Election Fight—Mr. Asquith's Challenge—Hyde Park Demonstration—Newcastle

THE announcement of another Women's Parliament opened our year's campaign. Its purpose again was to consider the programme to be laid by the Government before the other Parliament.

The Parliamentary recess had given many opportunities for questions at Cabinet Ministers' meetings. Haldane, Harcourt, Buxton, Burns, and others had been firmly interrogated: 'Will the Government include Votes for Women in the King's Speech?'

In anticipation of the Prime Minister's meeting, the Aberdeen branch of the Women's Liberal Association had passed a resolution in which, while dissociating themselves from the militants and their methods, they urged upon the Government the 'necessity' of introducing a Bill giving votes to women 'in order that they might safeguard their own interests'. In an accompanying letter they said that the Government's delay in doing so was 'placing a severe strain upon their loyalty'. The *Aberdeen Free Press*, commenting upon this resolution, remarked that the Liberal women's adoption of a non-militant policy was, 'with the connivance of the party managers, being cited as conclusive evidence that Liberal women do not want the vote'.

We militants had, of course, arranged to question Mr. Asquith at his meeting, but consented—when appealed to by the men Liberals of Aberdeen—to refrain, on condition that the Liberal women should be permitted to put the necessary question. This the President of their Association did, but only to be told by the chairman that she was out of order, to be howled at by part of the audience and to receive, from Mr. Asquith, a negative reply.

In all parts of the country Liberal women were getting restive. 'We have been hewers of wood and drawers of water too long for the Liberal Party,' said one of the leading personalities in the Women's Liberal Federation.

The Mid-Devon by-election was an important event of this time; the candidates were Mr. Charles Buxton (Liberal) and Mr. Morrison-Bell (Conservative). Our anti-Government election policy scored one of its greatest victories at Mid-Devon and the influence of Mother and her legions in that campaign was admitted everywhere. Mother and Mrs. Martel narrowly escaped serious injury, and Mother was indeed lamed for a time, when they were mobbed by the rougher elements among the defeated candidate's supporters. 'There can be no doubt that the Suffragists did influence votes,' said the *Manchester Guardian*. 'Their activity, the interest shown in their meetings, the success of their persuasive methods in enlisting popular sympathy, the large number of working women who acted with them as volunteers—these were features of the election which, although strangely ignored by most of the newspapers, must have struck most visitors to the Constituency.'

The Mid-Devon victory was followed by others. An article in the *Daily Chronicle*, containing sarcastic advice to Liberals on how to lose a by-election, counted the Suffragettes as one of the important forces now arrayed against the Government. In the Leeds election campaign, as in many another, Mother had the aid of Mrs. Massy whose mother, Lady Knyvett, was one of the most beloved of our senior members.

A memorable demonstration closed the Leeds campaign. 'Everything else paled,' said the *Daily Mail*, 'before the last effort of the Suffragettes. It was picturesque, exhilaratingly triumphant. Mrs. Pankhurst and her followers had hit upon the idea of a torchlight procession to Hunslet Moor.'

When this Leeds election resulted in a considerable loss of ground for Liberalism, the Liberal *Leeds Mercury* editorially reminded the Conservatives that their candidate owed a good many votes to the activity of the Suffragettes who 'by all accounts, created an unexpectedly favourable impression in the Constituency'. Our object was, of course, not to win votes *for* the candidate of other parties, but simply to take votes away from the candidate of a Government which refused to enfranchise women.

Parliament assembled. The King's Speech proved silent as to Votes for Women. Our Women's Parliament, assembled in Caxton Hall, resolved that a deputation should convey a message of protest to the Prime Minister. Fifty women were arrested, including Miss Naylor, Miss Florence Haig, Miss Winifred Mayo, Misses Georgina and Marie Brackenbury, Miss Elsa Gye, Miss Mary Phillips, and Mrs. Rigby.

Next day they were tried. Mr. Muskett, prosecuting for the Crown, remarked that the powers of the Authorities were not exhausted, and that if such action as this continued, they would be obliged to prosecute the militant women under the Statute of Charles II, forbidding a procession of more than ten persons to the House of Commons. This would transfer the matter from the Police Court to a higher Court, but on this occasion he asked that the cases should be tried summarily. Forty-seven of the accused were bound over to keep the peace for twelve months. They chose the alternative of six weeks' imprisonment.

Mother, just returned from the Leeds election, appeared at the second session of the Women's Parliament, and reported the enthusiasm of the women of Leeds: 'I have come back to London feeling, as I have never felt before, that we are nearing the end of this struggle,' she said, 'and that the time has come when I must act. If you carry the resolution that I am about to put to you, I volunteer from the Chair to be one of those to carry it to Parliament.' She called for the immediate enfranchisement of women. Annie Kenney, seconding the motion, declared that she would follow Mrs. Pankhurst that day as as she had done since she first met her. Mother then left the hall, followed by Annie Kenney, Gladice Keevil, Mrs. Baldock, Mrs. Kerwood, Mrs. Sidley, Mary Frith, Annie Park, and Mary Keegan.

The enemy's threat to invoke the Act of Charles II held no new terror for us—prison was prison after all, under whatever Act imposed. A certain historic flavour, a new political dignity would be imparted to our struggle, were this ancient Statute really invoked against us.

Mother, being still lame from the injury to her ankle suffered at Mid-Devon, drove in a pony-cart, which she commandeered from a willing owner who happened to be driving past. The twelve others followed on foot. My account of what happened, written at the time, was this:

Watching them in the street were many policemen and a curious crowd. There was something intensely moving in the sight of these women, one in a little humble cart, the others walking two by two behind. They were so small in strength, so few in number, and yet they had a purpose strong to overcome the resistance of the Government, supported as it is by every material resource. As the little procession moved away, a bystander said 'That lot won't get far'; and so it was, for they had not gone many yards before the police fell upon them, ordered the leader out of the trap, and broke the ranks of those on foot. What cannot be too often repeated is that our friends obeyed the directions of the police in every particular except that they persisted in walking, singly, on being told to walk singly, in the direction of the House of Commons. This purely political and technical offence was made the basis of a charge against them of obstructing the police.

Mother and the other prisoners, being released on bail, appeared that evening at the Women's Parliament. The hall was crowded and enthusiasm was at the highest pitch. 'We shall never rest or falter,' Mother said, 'till the long weary struggle for enfranchisement is won.' She never did!

The next day they were tried, but the Government's threat was not fulfilled, the Act of Charles II's time being left to slumber still. They were dealt with as were the prisoners of the preceding day and were imprisoned for like terms.

'When the history of the militant campaign comes to be written one of its chief events will be held to have been the Women's Parliament of February 1908.' So I wrote in *Votes for Women* at the time and, viewed in retrospect, it has proved to be so. The warning delivered by Mother then is itself historic. She said:

My experience in the country, and especially in South Leeds, has taught me things which Cabinet Ministers have no means of knowing, and made me feel that I would make this attempt to see them and to urge them to reconsider their position before some disaster has occurred. Thousands and thousands of men and women followed our procession through the streets and attended our meeting on the Moor, and among them all was hardly a sneer or a jeer. But what impressed me most and made me a bit afraid, was the stern determination of the crowd to restrain any demonstration against us. We had to beg and plead with the people to spare the few who showed hostility to us, or serious consequences would have resulted.

While Mother was in prison, a Woman Suffrage Bill, introduced by a private member, Mr. H. Y. Stanger, passed its second reading in the House of Commons by 271 votes to 92. Our next step was to ask for the Government support without which the Bill could go no further. Mr. Herbert Gladstone, a Member of the Government, said in the second-reading debate that the predominance of argument alone—and he believed we had won this—was not enough to win the vote. ‘The time comes,’ said he, ‘when political dynamics are far more important than political argument’. Alas, we had discovered that: it was the reason why we had taken to militancy.

Militancy was at this time discussed by the legal lights forming the Hardwicke Society, and on their annual ladies’ night I was invited to take part in a debate on this motion: ‘That the grant of suffrage to woman has been indefinitely postponed by the violent methods of its supporters.’ The motion was defeated. Militancy triumphed.

A great event of this year was our Albert Hall meeting, the first woman suffrage meeting ever held there and the largest indoor gathering ever held until then by anybody in support of votes for women. Mother’s prison sentence did not expire until after the date appointed for this meeting. Her place was left empty, save for a placard: ‘Mrs. Pankhurst’s Chair.’ The vast hall was overflowing, many being turned away. Intense determination animated that great throng of women. Thunders of applause broke out as the speakers entered—but they were above all for Mother and the other absent ones.

An announcement was made. ‘The Government have, for some reason not unconnected with our present by-election campaign at Peckham, decided to release the prisoners, and Mrs. Pankhurst will after all take the chair tonight.’ An instant more and Mother was in her place. Those thousands of women were afoot, cheering and cheering again. Mother spoke. The contrast between the quiet, bare, narrow prison cell and this vast hall, this human throng, this vibrance and intensity, was almost overwhelming. Yet she rose as ever to the occasion. Finally she moved the resolution calling upon the Government to adopt and carry into law the Women’s Enfranchisement Bill then before Parliament.

We sought to supply the needful dynamic by opposing the Government at the Peckham by-election just then pending, and at the

Battle of Peckham we won a great victory. A Liberal majority of 2,339 was wiped out and the Government nominee defeated by 2,494 votes. The successful candidate admitted that 'a great feature of this election has been the activity of the supporters of woman suffrage'.

This Peckham campaign was one of the most inspiring in W.S.P.U. history. It enabled us to concentrate our forces. The meetings in Peckham Rye commanded the interest of London in general, and thousands came to them from far as well as near, and the London newspapers could see and report our doings at close range. 'Everyone seems agreed,' said the *Pall Mall Gazette*, 'that the best speeches are being made by the lady suffragists. . . . Whatever may be one's views on the question of Woman Suffrage, no fair-minded man can deny the remarkable ability with which it is presented by the women in Peckham.'

Mother was released in time to crown the campaign and addressed what the newspapers called 'a remarkable demonstration' in the largest hall in the constituency.

Is it not time [wrote Mr. St. John Ervine in the *Nation*] that Mr. Asquith gave up minimizing the importance of the Suffragists? I confess that this Peckham election has been a revelation to me. . . . You, Sir, cannot realize the influence which a speaker like Miss Christabel Pankhurst, fluent of speech, quick-witted, good-humoured, can exert on that great army ever present in each constituency which is always on the wobble.

Our complete political impartiality was a powerful factor in our influence at elections. If we had been working, not simply against the Government, but for the Conservative Party or for the Labour Party, our influence would not have been a tithe, or indeed a hundredth part, of what it was. We should then have been suspected of sharpening a party-political axe upon votes for women as a grindstone.

A Conservative or a Labour Government which did not give women the vote would have been opposed by us, precisely as we were then opposing the Liberal Government.

The victory of Peckham was quickly followed by the victory of North-West Manchester. Mr. Winston Churchill, on his ministerial promotion, had to seek re-election. We were there in force to oppose

him. Dramatic was the contrast between our first and second election fights in that constituency. In two short years, what an astounding change! In 1906 we were few and still feeble, making what many then thought futile interruptions at Mr. Churchill's meetings. In 1908 we were many, strong, with public opinion on our side. Leaving Mr. Churchill's meetings alone, we had meetings of our own, many meetings, magnificent meetings. In 1906 the Liberals won the election in North-West Manchester. In 1908 the Suffragettes won it.

It was a famous victory. 'Perhaps I ought to say a word as to one other vote I shall give,' said Mr. Joynson Hicks, the successful candidate. 'I acknowledge the assistance I have received from those ladies who are sometimes laughed at, but who, I think, will now be feared by Mr. Churchill—the Suffragists. They have worked well for the cause they have at heart, and I congratulate them in having taken some part in the victory.'

The fame of the contest spread to other lands and the correspondent of the Paris *Matin* wrote: 'One is able to remark, not without astonishment, that the influence of the Suffragettes on the election is very considerable.'

Of course our opposition to Mr. Churchill was not a personal matter. If he had produced a Government pledge to adopt and carry the Woman Suffrage Bill, then before Parliament, which had actually passed the second reading, we should at once have abandoned our opposition to him. All he offered us, however, was a statement that he would, as an individual, do his best to help women to get the vote, because they had, said he, not only a logical case, but their movement now had behind it a great popular demand and had thus assumed the same character as previous franchise movements.

Here was evidence of what militancy had already done for the suffrage cause!

To Dundee went Mr. Churchill, and the W.S.P.U. also, for another strenuous campaign. Here he was successful. Party spirit was strong, party allegiance more rigid at the time, in Scotland, than south of the Border. This fact meant a distinct setback to our work, because it so happened that Scotland was the scene of other by-elections just then, and thus our conquering election progress was checked for the time.

Another misfortune of 1908 was the disappearance of the Prime Minister, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and his replacement by Mr.

Asquith. 'C.-B.' was personally in favour of giving us the vote, though restrained from doing so by the bitter opposition of other members of his Government, and we believed that he would willingly have acceded to our demand as soon as we should have exerted enough compulsion.

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman it was who had counselled us to 'go on pestering people'. One day, Annie Kenney and Mary Gawthorpe, finding themselves in the dining-car of a railway train with C.-B., then still Prime Minister, entered into conversation with him concerning our claim and our methods and found him essentially sympathetic. But he was tired, his days were already numbered and he passed from the scene, leaving us to meet and fight a harsher foe.

Had Mid-Devon, Peckham, and North-West Manchester been followed by a few more such victories—or perhaps even one more—the Government would then have been compelled to grant women the vote. What hard years of struggle should we have been spared!

'In less than three years the women's movement has conquered the most stubborn conservatism of all, the conservatism of the privileged sex,' acknowledged the *Daily News*.

'In less than three years!' Since October 1905 Mother and her W.S.P.U. had begun militancy, and had, as Mr. Baldwin in 1928 expressed it, 'fired the shot that rang round the world!'

Militancy had brought woman suffrage so far into the region of practical politics that a deputation of sixty Liberal members of the House of Commons waited on Mr. Asquith to ask him to give facilities for the enactment of Mr. Stanger's Woman Suffrage Bill in the current session, or at least in the existing Parliament. Mr. Asquith observed that his own position with regard to woman suffrage was 'a delicate one'. He had 'not reached that state of grace' in which the members of the deputation were 'so fully and firmly established'. To give, that Session, facilities for Mr. Stanger's Bill was 'wholly out of the question'. As to the remainder of that Parliament, his intention was to introduce an electoral reform measure for men only, and it would clearly be within the competence of the House of Commons to seek, by amendment or extension of this Government Bill, to effect the accomplishment of the great purpose they had in view. It was, he said, necessary that a great constitutional change of this kind must have

behind it the support of the women of the country, as well as the present electorate. Thereupon—and this should be noted well in view of the sequel—Mr. Asquith was asked by Mr. Leif Jones, M.P., whether it might be distinctly understood that the proposed Reform Bill would be drafted on lines wide enough to admit of the inclusion of the suggested amendment giving votes for women. Mr. Asquith's reply was in the affirmative. It would, he said, *be a breach of the pledge he had given if the Bill in contemplation was not drafted in such a manner.*

We wholly objected to this project. We condemned and rejected Mr. Asquith's proposition on grounds set forth in this letter published in *The Times*:

Mr. Asquith and Woman Suffrage.

To the Editor of *The Times*:

Sir,

The reply of Mr. Asquith to the deputation of Liberal members of Parliament confirms the Women's Social & Political Union in their determination to fight against the Government.

In the first place, Mr. Asquith refuses to deal with the question this Session, either on his own initiative or by giving facilities to Mr. Stanger's Bill. He reverts to the old Liberal policy of delay, the fruits of which we have seen so often before.

In the second place, he now makes it clear that the Government have no intention themselves at any time during the present Parliament of introducing a measure of woman suffrage; and at the same time do intend to introduce a Bill dealing with electoral reform for the benefit of men alone.

We are not in the least reassured by his reported statement that a woman suffrage amendment, moved by a private member, to this Bill would not, under certain circumstances, be opposed by the Government, as it is of too negative and vague a character to be of any value. Moreover, the Government cannot shirk direct responsibility in this matter. Nothing short of a definite pledge of action this Session will satisfy the Women's Social & Political Union, and unless this is given we shall continue to bring effective pressure on the Government. Our policy of opposing their nominees at by-elections, which has proved so successful in the past, will be vigorously pursued. And if, after our demonstration in Hyde Park on Sunday, June 21, the Government are still obdurate, we shall take it as a signal that further militant action is required to wring from them the necessary reform.

CHRISTABEL PANKHURST

A Liberal newspaper remarked that 'a more mature and experienced leader than Miss Christabel Pankhurst would have understood that the pledge which Mr. Asquith has given is quite exceptionally definite and binding'. Unfortunately the event was to prove that Liberal journalism had not so correctly anticipated the future course of events as had the militant women. The danger was that if once universal Manhood Suffrage were established, the barrier against women's admission to the suffrage would be stronger than ever. The removal of the existing electoral disability of sex would mean the enfranchisement of about one and a half million women; under an unlimited franchise it would mean that women voters would be more numerous than men. It would incur, therefore, far greater opposition. We declined to adopt the self-destructive all-or-none policy suggested to us which would result in votes for all men and none for women. The Women's Enfranchisement Bill then before Parliament, but blocked by Mr. Asquith's refusal of facilities, satisfied us because, as we said, it not only would admit women to the existing franchise, but would ultimately ensure to women a franchise as unrestricted as the franchise of men.

We must, insisted Mr. Asquith, prove, in order to secure even his neutrality for a woman suffrage amendment, that a majority of women were behind it. We believed we had proved this. Mr. Asquith's colleague in the Cabinet, Mr. Winston Churchill, had just acknowledged that, in regard to the support given by women to the suffrage question, 'it assumes the character that previous franchise movements have assumed'. We more than suspected that Mr. Asquith did not want to be convinced that the women of the country were behind woman suffrage.

However, in fairness to him as well as to women, we invited him, through a question obligingly asked at our request in the House of Commons, to state what proof he would accept, what test he would appoint, of women's demand for the vote. He refused, as we expected, saying: 'There is a variety of ways in which opinion can be expressed. It is not for me to say which is likely to be most effective.' Mr. Asquith knew, and so did we, that any and all the evidence he might call for would be forthcoming. By his reply he reserved to himself the freedom to declare himself unconvinced by it.

Proof we certainly gave. Mrs. Pankhurst was stirring the country from end to end—the women and the men too. The world watched the

contest between Asquith and that woman, fragile, sensitive, but how ardent and heroic, who, as every witness understood, had pledged her life for the woman's cause.

The Asquithian challenge to prove popular support was taken up with, if possible, even greater energy.

Great demonstrations were planned in London and the Provinces—and, as a climax, we appointed a Women's Day in Hyde Park. It was to see the greatest franchise demonstration in all history. Mr. and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence laid plans of a largeness and boldness equal to the need, and that greatest of all suffrage demonstrations magnificently crowned their efforts.

The non-militants, like ourselves, were responding to Mr. Asquith's challenge. They had held a most impressive procession representative of all the various interests and activities of women, which proceeded to the Albert Hall, the whole demonstration being the largest and most important they had held.

We militants were also holding vast open-air demonstrations in other parts of the country, and these continued through the summer.

Our Women's Day arrived. Our seven processions converged upon Hyde Park, bands playing, purple, white, and green banners flying. The multitude in Hyde Park was past numbering. From twenty platforms women claimed political liberty. The police, as ever on these occasions, co-operated most helpfully in directing traffic and making way for processions and speakers through the dense and friendly crowds. *The Times* reported: 'The organizers had counted on an attendance of 250,000. That expectation was certainly fulfilled. Probably it was doubled; and it would be difficult to contradict anyone who asserted confidently that it was trebled. Like the distances and numbers of the stars, the facts were beyond the threshold of perception.'

As a mark of appreciation of the service rendered by the police at the demonstration, the W.S.P.U. addressed to the Chief Commissioner of Police a letter of thanks with donations to the Police Orphanage and Police Relief Fund.

What would Mr. Asquith say? We had eclipsed every peaceful demonstration made by men when asking for votes. What was the breaking down of the Hyde Park railings in the eighteen-sixties compared to the women's mighty manifestation? Alas, to a party

politician's eye and ear a broken railing is more convincing than the mightiest meeting and the most earnest and reasoned verbal pleading!

A letter was immediately despatched to Mr. Asquith informing him of the resolution carried in Hyde Park—'that this meeting calls upon the Government to grant votes to women without delay'—and asking what action his Government intended to take in response to the demand of the great popular assemblage.

Mr. Asquith's reply did not tarry. He spent no time in consideration or in discussion with his colleagues.

'The Prime Minister desires me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday and of the resolution adopted at the demonstration in Hyde Park, and to inform you that he has nothing to add to the statement made to a deputation of Members of Parliament on 20th May, a report of which appeared in *The Times* of the following day.' This was Asquith's only answer to the greatest franchise demonstration in history! For all the difference it made to him, we might have spared ourselves and all concerned the trouble of holding it at all!

We sent the following statement, with the correspondence, to the Press:

The Prime Minister's reply shows that the Government intend to ignore the mandate which was delivered to them by the great Hyde Park demonstration.

The Prime Minister, in the course of the statement to which he refers, stated it to be a condition of women's enfranchisement that a popular demand should first be made. That condition the Women's Social & Political Union has just fulfilled, by holding a demonstration which was by far the largest political gathering ever known in this country. In spite of this, the Prime Minister, without even consulting the Cabinet, replies that he has nothing to add to the highly unsatisfactory declaration which he made some weeks ago. It is thus quite evident that agitation by way of public meetings will have no effect in inducing the Government to grant votes to women, and that in order to secure this reform militant methods must once more be resorted to.

Our Women's Convention met in mingled enthusiasm and indignation. Time was not wasted in words, for they had proved vain. We were not assembled, said Mother, to discuss woman suffrage in the abstract, but for definite action. The resolution she was about to move would be carried to the House of Commons by a small deputation of

thirteen women selected from many volunteers. She hoped that Mr. Asquith would receive them, for she believed that they were doing the right and proper thing. Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence followed, saying that she was prepared to carry the message to the House of Commons, taking the risk of so doing, whatever it might be. Both speakers, with Miss Wallace Dunlop, Miss Florence Haig, Miss Clemence Housman, Miss Maud Joachim and others, thirteen in all, then went on their mission. They were met, on leaving the hall, by Police Superintendent Wells, who cleared their way as far as the House of Commons. The crowds that had assembled cheered them. The Prime Minister's illiberal contempt of the mighty demonstration of ten days earlier had moved the public to even greater sympathy with the women, whose militancy had thus been newly vindicated.

Outside the House of Commons stood the police, in strong force, headed by Inspector Scantlebury, who informed the deputation that he was instructed to bar their entry to the House and that the Prime Minister refused to receive them. Mother had promised to return, if possible, and report to the waiting convention, and the deputation withdrew. In anticipation of further action by the women, the general public was massing in Parliament Square. The evening tide of humanity, instead of flowing outward and homeward, was flowing inward to Westminster. Our women were making their way through the crowds to the House of Commons, demanding entrance. Some arrived by boat off the terrace; others entered Palace Yard by cab; one, Miss Jessie Stephenson, got inside the building. Parliament was guarded by police as against some dangerous and terrible enemy. By admission of Mr. Gladstone, the Home Secretary, one thousand, six hundred and ninety-four extra constables were on duty. Arrests were made and after trial the following day, twenty-seven women were imprisoned, including Mother's sister Mary, and Miss Logan, daughter of a Member of Parliament.

Window-breaking began that night. It was women's first use of the political argument of the stone. Mary Leigh and Edith New, taking counsel with no one, had gone to Downing Street carrying stones, and had flung them at the windows of the Prime Minister's official abode. Defending this action in Court the next day, the two prisoners said that having tried every other means to attain their end, and having failed, they had had to take more militant measures. The responsibility for what they had done rested on those who made women outlaws by the

law of the land. These two were sentenced to two months' imprisonment without the option of a fine. Many questions were asked in Parliament about them and about the treatment of the twenty-five prisoners who were serving terms of one or two months in default of finding sureties. Claims were made for the treatment of Suffragettes with the consideration due to their quality as political prisoners.

Meantime, Cabinet Ministers were being challenged by Suffragettes at every opportunity. Visiting the Manchester University, Lord Morley was presented with a petition and a copy of *Votes for Women*, while Mr. Haldane discreetly disappeared from view ere he could be interrogated as to his recent part in the Government's dealing with the cause.

Mother was carrying the fight into Wales, where a by-election was in progress, besides addressing the immense open-air demonstrations held that summer in Lancashire, Yorkshire, the Midlands, the West Country, the extreme North of England, and in Scotland.

Another London by-election gave us an opportunity of procuring a vote of censure upon the Government, and at Haggerston their nominee was drastically defeated.

Mr. Lloyd George was to speak in the Queen's Hall in connection with the Peace Congress meeting in London. Nothing had been heard lately from him and so we welcomed the opportunity of question and answer which this Peace Meeting provided. The occasion was so appropriate! Suffragettes attended the meeting in goodly numbers, taking their place in the serried rows of peace-makers. Songs of peace were chanted: in due time Mr. Lloyd George arose. At his first mention of the word 'Peace' a woman rose and her voice rang out: 'Peace should begin at home.' Shouts greeted the woman's words. Peace took flight from that meeting. Following Miss Macauley, the first protester, Mrs. Baldock caused a sensation by springing up on the platform from behind the speakers. Her voice was drowned by the angry cries from the audience and she was ejected by force. Mr. Lloyd George, at this point, assured the meeting of his belief in woman suffrage, but a third Suffragette inquired in clearest tone: 'Then why don't you see that we get it?'

Deeply in earnest as we were in our fight, we could not help relishing the comic touches that enlivened it. The pestering of Cabinet Ministers was rich in humour, though perhaps we saw the humour of

it better than they did. I personally attached the very greatest importance to the humorous aspect of our campaign. For one thing, it eased the strain and burden of the solemnities, the hardships of what was essentially and primarily a *sacrificial* campaign. It relieved the sadness that came of dwelling on the ill-results of the disfranchisement of women. Furthermore, while we Suffragettes had a natural or acquired immunity to ridicule, our opponents apparently had not, and so we had the best, and they the worst, of every joke. Women's claim to the vote, and thus to political existence, had, until militancy began, been treated as a political jest and this jest now came back as a boomerang upon the Government.

The best laugh is the last laugh, and that was already ours and would be to the end.

Another international gathering, in favour of Free Trade, gave a fine Suffragette opportunity. Mr. Winston Churchill, chief speaker, having uttered the words 'What have our Dominions done?', a Suffragette remarked: 'Given votes to women, which you have not.' Asked to desist, the Suffragette replied: 'Your forefathers did as I have done until they got the liberty you enjoy.'

It was with triumphant glee that we read a notice in the Press stating that 'It is understood that no ladies of British nationality are to be admitted to the dinner to be given by Mr. Harcourt to the members of the International Peace Conference. The object of course is to prevent a repetition of the Suffragist interruptions that occurred during Mr. Lloyd George's speech at the Queen's Hall.' The Suffragettes had certainly scored!

The best of it was that there was another banquet, and a far more appetizing one, available just then for the Suffragettes. It was the Free Trade banquet given by the Cobden Club to the delegates of the International Free Trade Congress. Mr. Asquith was to attend that banquet and Mr. Asquith was the greatest of all attractions to the Suffragettes. It was none too easy to gain admission to this Free Trade Banquet. British women, though not, as at the Peace Banquet, unconditionally banned, were all under suspicion of being militant vote-seekers. Yet one of our women did get in. Said the functionary to whom she gave up her ticket: 'We have to be so careful because of the Suffragettes.'

The Prime Minister rose to speak. Our Suffragette let him continue a while. Then—her heart deeply stirred as she contrasted this feasting

Premier with her comrades in bare cells eating prison fare—she intervened. With loud clear tone she demanded the vote. Hauled from the place, she repeated her accusing cry as long and often as she could make it heard. . . .

Parliament had risen. Cabinet Ministers had gone holiday-making, leaving our women in prison. At last the gates opened to release Miss New and Mrs. Leigh. Their carriage was drawn by women, and followed by a procession to the Queen's Hall. Remarkable public sympathy was shown. 'The really significant thing'—the *Daily News* acknowledged editorially—was the 'enthusiasm with which the prisoners and their friends were received by the crowds'. It was 'quite evident that the feeling of the people in general, and especially in London, is coming round to the side of the Suffragettes. It is courage that has done it—courage, persistence and the devotion that always wins respect and sympathy in the end'.

Holidays hardly counted with the Suffragettes in their long-lasting war time! Open-air demonstrations continued in the Provinces. The London weekly rallies were transferred to the large Queen's Hall.

Mother, after a short holiday, punctuated by meetings on Deeside, sped to Newcastle-on-Tyne to fight the Government at the critical by-election there. Summoning her helpers, she wrote: 'We must win this election. I am eager to fight a better fight than ever before.' The campaign began with a storm, for a hostile element tried at the outset to drive her from the field. Mother 'faced the music', as the Newcastle *Daily Chronicle* expressed it, 'with complete intrepidity', and, as the *North Mail* reported: 'Mrs. Pankhurst is by no means dismayed by the stormy scenes which accompanied her first meeting.'

A triumphal progress was the Newcastle campaign from that first meeting! Mother carried all before her. It was her election. The Liberal candidate, wrote the Newcastle *Daily Chronicle*, had 'a good deal more to fear from the confirmed "agin the Government" attitude of Mrs. Pankhurst and her hench-women, than from the "most earnest endeavours" of the opposing candidate'.

When Holloway released its remaining Suffragette prisoners—Misses Florence Haig, Maud Joachim, Elsie Howey, Mary Phillips and Vera Wentworth, they too went to the by-election to appeal against their captors. Newcastle turned out to cheer them. It was a day of tri-

umph. The whole city was roused, and working-men voters were foremost in their enthusiasm. The Suffragettes won the Newcastle election, inflicting overwhelming defeat upon the Government.

Speaking from the window of her hotel to the crowds assembled without, Mother said that Newcastle that day had given a verdict for true democracy. The Conservatives had gained a great victory, but she warned them that women would be as much against them if, when they came into office, they did not give women the vote.

A leading manufacturer wrote to Mr. Asquith from Newcastle informing him of 'the very great and unmistakable effect on the result that has been brought about by the efforts of the Suffragettes'. He went on:

Since the Suffragettes came among us, they have in less than a fortnight, by their energetic canvassing and brilliant reasoning powers, aroused large numbers of sluggards, and converted large numbers of political waverers into becoming enthusiasts in their cause, and into showing their enthusiasm in the most practical manner by voting against a Government which has plenty of members who *think* favourably of votes for women but have not got beyond the thinking stage. The Suffragettes have undoubtedly also largely influenced the engineers' votes. This election has, I and others feel, been won off their bat. Why not give them the vote and thus secure for the Liberal Party their energetic and brilliant argumentative powers at the next General Election?

Strengthened by this Newcastle victory Mrs. Pankhurst returned to London and addressed a letter to the Prime Minister regarding the Woman Suffrage Bill which, having months before passed its second reading, was still before the House of Commons. She wrote:

At many large demonstrations held all over the country, resolutions have been carried with practical unanimity, calling upon the Government to adopt this Bill and pass it into law this year. At a succession of by-elections, the voters have shown unmistakably their desire that the Government shall deal with the question without delay. We shall esteem it a favour if you will inform us whether it is the intention of the Government to carry the Women's Enfranchisement Bill during the Autumn Session of Parliament. . . .

1908—Continued

Rushing the House of Commons—Mrs. Baines' Trial by Jury—Mr. Lloyd George's Message—Women Excluded

SUFFRAGE energies had not in the meantime been wholly spent at Newcastle—far from that! Propaganda meetings had been continuing in London and country-wide. Mr. Asquith, Mr. Harcourt, Mr. Runciman, were all challenged by indignant women at their respective meetings.

Not that the Suffragettes went scatheless. As the Liberal Press admitted, it was the women, and not the Cabinet Ministers, who were hurt at these meetings into which the women ventured.

Fresh justification for the Suffragette methods was now provided by the Prime Minister's refusal to grant facilities for the Woman Suffrage Bill in the Autumn Session.

The following manifesto was issued to the members of the W.S.P.U.:

Parliament is about to meet to continue the work of legislation. The Government will endeavour to carry through their final stages certain measures already considered by the House of Commons.

The Bill for the Enfranchisement of Women, which earlier in the year passed its second reading by a great majority, finds no place in the Government programme, although every effort has been made by women to convince the Cabinet that it is expedient, as well as just, that the disability of sex should be removed without further delay.

Great demonstrations, exceeding in size any ever held in support of any other question, have taken place all over the country.

At the by-elections, the voters have voted against the Government on the issue of votes for women.

To all these manifestations of the people's will, the Government continue blind and deaf.

It is for us who are called the militant women to take further action

and to show our determination to break down this obstinate resistance to our just demands.

On the 13th October we shall meet in the Caxton Hall and we have asked those who support our demands to assemble in Parliament Square.

From our meeting in Caxton Hall will be chosen a deputation to go again, as deputations have gone before, to the House of Commons, to enter the House—if possible the Chamber itself—and lay our claim to the vote before the Government and Parliament.

Women have the right, being voteless, to plead their cause in person. We shall insist on that right. . . .

We know, the country knows, and the Government knows that our so-called militant action has forced the question of votes for women into the very forefront of practical politics.

We have the support and sympathy of the best men and women. Public opinion is with us and we have only to press forward to win victory in the near future.

On the 13th October, in Parliament Square, there will be many thousands of people to see fair play between the women and the Government.

Let us keep their support and co-operation by showing them, as we have done before, with what quiet courage, self-restraint and determination women are fighting against tyranny and oppression on the part of a Government which has been called the strongest of modern times. It is by the exercise of courage and self-restraint and persistent effort that we shall win in this unequal contest.

Thousands of our fellow countrywomen, who are unable by their circumstances to take an active part in the fight, are looking to us to obtain for them their political freedom.

All over the world women are gaining hope from our efforts here in England.

Let us then show the world on 13th October, 1908, that British women are determined to be free citizens of a free country before the year is out.

Yours, in the women's cause,

EMMELINE PANKHURST

The date which was thus appointed was the third anniversary of our Battle of the Marne, that Free Trade Hall protest and first imprisonment. In three years we had grown from a handful to a great host—from a little local movement to a nation-wide and on-sweeping tide.

Our friends, the general public, were told at a prior demonstration

in Trafalgar Square of our plans and our need of their sympathetic presence on 13th October.

The speakers in Trafalgar Square were Mother, Mrs. Drummond, and myself. Not until afterwards did we learn that in the great crowd, listening to our call for support, was a Cabinet Minister, none other than Mr. Lloyd George. His presence proved fortunate for us. At this meeting was distributed a leaflet which became famous. It bore the device: 'Men and Women—Help the Suffragettes to Rush the House of Commons.' That word 'Rush' rankled in the feelings of the foe. It was the proximate cause of the first of our big trials. It brought Mother and me and 'General' Drummond into the dock, and two Cabinet Ministers into the witness-box. Little did we suppose, in composing that momentous handbill, that so much would hang upon one short word 'rush'. At a loss for the *mot juste*, I had appealed to Mrs. Tuke. 'Raid will not do,' I said, 'it has been used so often. Give me a fresh word.' Help the Suffragettes to storm, or besiege or invade the House of Commons! None of these words was exactly right. 'Rush,' she suddenly suggested. '“Rush” it shall be!' The handbill was so printed.

Days passed, which were devoted to announcing the event of 13th October. A votes for women kite was flown above the Houses of Parliament; a banner-decked steamer moved up and down the river; pavements were chalked; meetings large and small, indoor and outdoor, were held.

On the day before 13th October a summons was served on the three Trafalgar Square speakers. It read thus:

Information has been laid this day by the Commissioner of Police that you in the month of October in the year 1908 were guilty of conduct likely to provoke a breach of the peace by initiating and causing to be published a certain handbill calling upon and inciting the public to a certain wrongful and illegal act, viz.: to rush the House of Commons at 7.30 p.m. on October 13th inst.

We were thereby summoned to appear that same day at 3.30 at Bow Street to show cause why we should not be ordered to find sureties for good behaviour. We decided, however, not to appear at Bow Street but to appear at the Queen's Hall instead, where, most conveniently, our usual weekly gathering would be held. The hall was crowded to the utmost, as a hint of some new happening had appeared in the early edition of the evening papers.

Mother made all known, saying: 'The Government's representatives are now, as I speak, expecting us at Bow Street, but we have decided that our engagement to meet you here is of far greater importance to us. So we are here, and we shall not go to Bow Street until they come and take us.'

Warrants for our arrest were issued, but we decided to appoint our own time and place for arrest. After twenty-four hours spent in an apartment on the roof of Clement's Inn, preparing for what might be a long absence, we descended to the office whither we had, by letter, summoned the police.

We now had our first experience of the police cells in which accused persons are kept until they appear before the magistrate, and were astounded and indignant that we or any persons charged, but not found guilty of an offence, should suffer the ordeal of a night in such conditions. Nothing could so unfit a person for the demands of the morrow. To us it obviously mattered less than to the ordinary accused prisoner, because we had no moral distress to suffer. We knew ourselves to be in the right and we had the support of thousands. Yet even for us, it was bad enough. Sleep would be impossible; the cell boasted but a narrow bench—the conditions were really indescribable. Prison hardships had hitherto never much troubled me—after all, one just had to go through with it, and there was no work to be done in prison which required one to be at concert pitch. But this, I thought, was too much! Mercifully for us, and for the work we had to do, Sir James Murray, M.P., came to the rescue. He was father-in-law of one of our young members, and had already welcomed Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, Mrs. Despard, and myself to Aberdeen, and shown much sympathy with our work. His genial and commanding presence brought life, cheer, and comfort to that dreary, foul place—that modern dungeon. He acted, and it was like a fairy tale. Beds from the Savoy were brought by minions quickly answering to the fairy wand. A table was spread and delicious foods and fruits appeared. Our gaolers, now all interest, lent a hand. When all was in order, our friend-in-need gave us hearty good wishes for the coming trial. With thankful hearts we fed and slept, and awoke refreshed and ready for all that might betide. . . .

Stirring things had been happening in the world outside our cells.

'Make strong protest tonight against injustice of the Liberal Government' had been our message to the women gathered in Caxton Hall. They needed no bidding. The meeting sent forth a deputation formed

of Mrs. Monck Mason, Clara Codd, Ada Wright, Wallace Dunlop, Flatman-Ansell and others, followed by many women acting on their individual responsibility. Never had such crowds gathered at Westminster. The handbill had done its work, not to speak of the immense publicity given by the Government proceedings against us. Five thousand police were, according to Government confession, on duty. The Home Secretary, who took a close personal interest in the proceedings, came out to watch them. It was the biggest encounter yet between the Government and the Suffragettes and their sympathizers and, although arrests followed and imprisonments were many, that night saw another strategic victory for women.

While the great crowds were surging, shouting, cheering outside, and women were fighting their way towards the doors of Parliament and being beaten back, only to renew their efforts, a woman had suddenly appeared at the Bar of the House, had all but seized the mace and had raised the accusing and appealing cry 'Give votes to women'. . . .

A turning point in the movement had now been reached, for the Government had adopted a new plan for ending our militancy. Was it the plan of giving votes to women? Far from that! Their new plan was coercion in a new form. The leaders were to be captured and, by stern treatment, convinced of the error of their ways. The futility of this plan was evident. One of the leaders, or ringleaders, or whatever they were pleased to call us, whom they had just arrested, had been the first to insist at every cost upon being arrested and going to prison as a protest against disfranchisement. Why then should the Government hope to quell militancy by arresting and imprisoning the leaders? We thought we knew why! They hoped, by capturing the shepherds, to scatter the flock! This view of their inner motive was fully vindicated some four years later, when they attempted to capture all those in control of the movement—an attempt which was most fortunately frustrated by my stepping through their net and escaping to Paris—but that is to anticipate!

We now return to Bow Street for the trial of 14th October 1908. We defended ourselves, the legal aspects of the affair being left mainly to me as the lawyer of our trio. At the outset we asked that the case be sent for trial and not dealt with summarily, as we were advised that under a section of the Summary Jurisdiction Act we were entitled to the option of being tried where we desired, and we wished the case to go before a jury. The prosecution told its tale and called as witnesses two

police officers. The first of these, Superintendent Wells, testified that, on visiting our office to inquire our intents for 13th October, he had been shown Mrs. Pankhurst's letter to Mr. Asquith and told that if a satisfactory reply were given there would be nothing but a great cheer, but if not, the women would try to enter the House of Commons. 'You cannot get there,' the witness had replied, 'unless you come with cannon.'

'Are you aware that a member of the Government was at our Trafalgar Square meeting?' he was asked, and answered: 'I don't know whether I should answer that.' 'You can say yes or no,' interposed the magistrate, so 'I saw one there,' said he. 'Was it Mr. Lloyd George?'—and his look was affirmative. 'At a later stage I shall have to require the presence of Mr. Lloyd George as one of the witnesses,' I remarked. 'You are aware,' the cross-examination proceeded, 'that, at another Trafalgar Square meeting many years ago, Mr. John Burns, now a member of the Government, used words very much more inflammatory, very much more calculated to lead to destruction and damage to property than anything we have said?' The witness was not aware—it was all beyond reach of his memory—but never mind, we had made our point. 'You are aware, however, that Mr. John Burns, as a member of the present Government, is responsible, jointly with his colleagues, for the action which has been taken against us?' 'Yes.' 'Were you present at a quite recent Trafalgar Square meeting when Mr. Thorne, M.P., made a speech in which he called upon the people to rush the bakers' shops?' 'I did not hear it,' replied Superintendent Wells, 'but it was reported to me.' 'Does it occur to you that this language used by a Member of Parliament was far more dangerous to the public peace than ours? He, too, used the word "rush" but he also incited the people to riot and violence. Does it occur to you that his conduct is more reprehensible than ours?' 'It occurs to me that he might be prosecuted the same as you are.' Mother asked the witness: 'Do you know that in previous franchise demonstrations, Mr. John Bright and Mr. W. E. Gladstone advised the people to do exactly as we have done?' 'To a certain extent,' was his reply. The trial was adjourned for a week, and Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Herbert Gladstone were requested to attend as witnesses, since the one had been present at the Trafalgar Square meeting and had received a copy of our handbill, and the other had seen the occurrences outside Parliament. They expressed doubt that their evidence would be of use. When I thereupon applied for a subpoena to

compel their attendance, Mr. Curtis Bennett suggested and advised the dispatch of a second letter to both, and this time they said they would appear.

The day came: the two Ministers were there. The Court was packed: the atmosphere was tense. Again, as at the Free Trade Hall three years ago, there was the relief of knowing women at that moment of political combat humanly even and equal with men. True, they still held back our vote, but they had to reckon with us as representing womanhood. We were in the dock, but they that day were also there. For the witness-box of the Police Court was really the dock in that larger and higher Court of public opinion, and indeed of history, before which we Suffragettes, the advocates for womanhood, were arraigning these two Ministers and political leaders on the charge of illiberality and injustice.

Mr. Lloyd George was first to enter the witness-box. 'Did you hear any violence advocated in Trafalgar Square?' we asked him. 'Not except to force an entrance to the House of Commons.' 'There were no words used so likely to incite to violence as the advice you gave at Swansea that women should be ruthlessly flung out of your meeting?' The witness said he had been, with his small daughter, in the neighbourhood of the House of Commons on 13th October. 'Did you think it safe to bring this young child?' 'Certainly, she was very much amused.' 'Were you yourself attacked or assaulted in any way?' 'No.'

'You are aware that we argue that, as we are deprived of a share in the election of Parliamentary representatives, we are entitled to go in person to the House of Commons?' 'That was a point put by Mrs. Pankhurst in the speech I heard.' 'Do you agree with that point of view?' 'I should not like to express an opinion.'

The magistrate interposed: 'It is not for the witness to express an opinion.'

We, of course, were not on that occasion sticklers for legal technicality! We were concerned to express, in question form, the home-truths we were ever desirous of declaring to Cabinet Ministers.

Mr. Lloyd George was then asked: 'Can you tell me whether any interference with public order took place in connection with previous movements for franchise reform?' He answered: 'I should think that was an historical fact.' 'Have we not received encouragement from you from your colleagues—to take action of this kind?' 'I should be

very much surprised to hear that.' 'Do you recognize these words as coming from a Liberal statesman: "I am sorry to say that if no instructions had ever been addressed in political crises to the people of this country, except to remember to hate violence and to love order, the liberties of this people would never have been attained"?' 'I cannot call them to mind.' 'They are the words of William Ewart Gladstone. Were you present in the House of Commons when his son, Mr. Herbert Gladstone, encouraged women to action of this kind?' 'No.' 'Do you know that John Bright and Joseph Chamberlain in the past recommended to men action such as we took on 13th October?'

Mother put the most telling question of the day, the question in which all others were summed up.

'I want to ask you whether in your opinion the whole of this agitation which women are carrying on—very much against the grain—would be immediately stopped if the constitutional right to vote were conceded to them?' 'I should think that is very likely,' replied Mr. Lloyd George.

Mr. Herbert Gladstone was rather cheery as he entered the witness-box.

'Did you anticipate that you would be in bodily danger as a consequence of the issue of this Bill?' he was asked. 'I didn't think of it at all.' 'Like ourselves you are above such a consideration!'

He thought that, but for the police, the crowd might have done more harm, yet admitted that, taking all our Westminster demonstrations together, very little harm had been done. 'Did you say,' he was asked, 'that it was impossible not to sympathize with the eagerness and passion which have actuated so many women on this subject, that you were entirely in favour of the principle of votes for women, that men had had to fight for their rights from the time of Cromwell and that for the last 130 years the warfare had been perpetual? Did you say that on this question of the franchise, experience had shown that argument alone is not enough to win the political day and that "there comes a time when political dynamics are far more than political argument"?' 'Yes,' was the answer to all these questions.

'Did you speak of men assembling in the "thirties", the "sixties" and the "eighties" of last century and do you know that we have done this in Leeds, in Hyde Park and throughout the country?' 'Yes.' 'Why don't you give us the vote then? Are you familiar with the words of your distinguished father, quoted in this Court today?' 'I heard the

quotation.' 'Do you assent to his proposition?' 'Yes.' 'Then you cannot condemn our methods any more.'

Mother then put the question: 'May I ask you this: Are you aware that ten thousand people assembled in the City Square in Leeds have just carried, with two dissentients, a resolution calling upon the Government to pass the Woman Suffrage Bill this Session?'

We thanked the two Cabinet Ministers for acting as witnesses and they departed, leaving us to trial, sentence, and imprisonment.

A long list of witnesses was called for the defence, but the longest trial must have its end and the moment came for the accused to address the magistrate. We had urged that the case go before a jury, but in vain. We had argued, with reference to the dictionaries and to common usage, that the word 'rush' implies 'haste' and not 'violence'. The only person who had succeeded in fulfilling our behest, and had rushed the House of Commons, was, happily, scot free, while we were in the dock. Unlawful assembling might be our offence—or incitement thereto—but to charge us with that would have brought us before a jury, which the Government feared to do, lest the public opinion, now so favourable to us, might bring about an acquittal.

Mrs. Pankhurst addressed the magistrate in the following words, ever memorable to those who heard them:

I was brought up by a father who taught his children, boys and girls alike, to realize they had a duty toward their country. I married a man whose wife I was, but also his comrade in all his public life. He was, as you know, sir, a distinguished member of your own profession, but he felt it his duty, in addition, to do public work to interest himself in the welfare of his fellow countrymen. Throughout the whole of our marriage, I was associated with him in his public work. I was for many years a Guardian of the Poor and a Member of the School Board, and, when that was abolished, of the Education Committee. This experience brought me into touch with many of my own sex who found themselves in a deplorable position because of the state of the English law as it affects women. You must have seen women come into this Court who would never have come here if married women were afforded by law that better claim to maintenance which should in justice be theirs when they give up their economic independence on marriage and are unable to earn a subsistence for themselves. You know how unjust the marriage and divorce laws are, and that the married woman has no due right of guardianship over her own children. Great suffering is endured by women because of the state of the law. Since my girlhood I have tried

'constitutional' methods. We have presented petitions and we have held meetings greater than men have ever held for any reform. We have faced hostile mobs at street corners because we were told we could not have our political rights unless we converted the whole of the country to our side. We have been misrepresented and we have been ridiculed; contempt has been poured upon us. We have faced the violence of ignorant mobs, unprotected by the safeguards provided for Cabinet Ministers.

I am here to take upon myself now, as I wish the prosecution had put upon me, the full responsibility for this agitation in its present phase. I want to address you as a woman who has performed all the ordinary duties of a woman, and, in addition, has performed those duties which ordinarily men have to perform, by earning a living for her children. I have moreover been a public official. For ten years I held an official post under the Registrar-General and performed those duties to the satisfaction of the department. After my duty in connection with taking the census was over, I was one of the few who qualified for a special bonus and was specially praised for the way in which the work was conducted. Well, I stand before you, having resigned that office when I was told that I must either do that or give up my part in this movement.

I want to make you realize that if you decide—I hope you will not—to bind us over, we shall not sign any undertaking as did the Member of Parliament¹ who was before you yesterday. Perhaps his reason for so doing was that the Prime Minister had given him some assurance that something would be done for the people he claimed to represent. We have received no such assurance. So if you decide against us today, to prison we must go because we feel that if we consented to be bound over we should be going back to the hopeless condition in which this movement was three years ago. We are driven to this; we are determined to go on with the agitation: we are in honour bound to do so until we win. Just as it was the duty of your forefathers to do it for you, it is our duty to make this world a better place for women. We believe that if we get the vote, it will mean changed conditions for our less fortunate sisters. We know how bad is the position of the women workers. Many women pass through this Court who would not, I believe, come before you if they were able to live morally and honestly. The average pay of women wage-earners is only seven shillings and sixpence a week. There are women who have been driven to live an immoral life because they cannot earn enough to live decently.

We believe that your work would be lightened if we got the vote.

¹ Mr. Will Thorne, M.P., who, after his name had been mentioned in the course of our trial, was also brought into Court. He maintained that no action would have been taken against him but for our having drawn attention to the matter.

Some of us have worked, as I have told you, for many years to help our own sex, and we have been driven to the conclusion that only through legislation can any improvement be effected, and that this legislation cannot be obtained until we have the same electoral power as men to move our representatives and to move Governments to pass the necessary laws.

I do not come here as an ordinary law-breaker. I should not be here if I had the same power to vote that even the wife-beater has, and the drunkard has—and in this I speak for all the other women who in the same cause have come before you and other magistrates.

This is the only way in which women can get the right of deciding how the taxes to which they contribute should be spent, and how the laws they have to obey should be made.

If you had power to send us to prison, not for six months, but for six years, for ten years, or for the whole of our lives, the Government must not think they can stop this agitation.

We are here, not because we are law-breakers; we are here in our efforts to become law-makers.

The magistrate's decision was given. As we refused to be bound over, the alternative was, for Mother and the General, three months' imprisonment, and for me ten weeks.

Back to prison! Back to the cell that it seemed one had never left. And imprisonment did, after all, express the crude reality of women's political condition. Being in prison, we Suffragettes were simply showing the politically fettered, and penalized political status of British womanhood.

Some reform in prison conditions one noted since former imprisonment. Ordinary prisoners—women who had been there more than once and perhaps often, for the sundry petty offences that victims of bad environment are tempted to commit—were already saying: 'Things are very different here since you ladies began coming.' Mother always insisted that better social conditions would empty the prisons of this type of prisoner, and her expectation has already been largely fulfilled, as prison statistics show.

Prison doors having closed upon us, those outside demanded for us the rank and treatment of political prisoners. What were the Government to do? By acknowledging us to be political prisoners, they admitted by implication that we were not ordinary law-breakers, but claimants to political liberty. If they refused us political treatment, they

increased the number of our sympathizers, for, strange to say, some persons were more wrought up by our treatment in prison than by the fact that we were prisoners at all. They seemed to think it far more grievous that we were denied the privileges of political prisoners than that we were denied the vote!

The Government's new coercive action, far from checking the movement, gave it new impetus. A notable and unique protest was made in the House of Commons by members of the Women's Freedom League who chained themselves to the grille which, in those days, made a cage of the Ladies' Gallery of the House of Commons. Fixed to their post they were able to make prolonged discourse on votes for women to the members seated below, for it was a lengthy and difficult task to break the fetters that bound them.

As the outcome of this highly effective protest, twelve more women were added to the twenty-five Suffragettes already in Holloway Gaol.

Cabinet Ministers were everywhere confronted by our members. The Prime Minister just then incautiously opened a bazaar at Highbury Athenaeum. 'Ladies and Gentlemen,' was his first sentence, 'you owe me no thanks.' 'Women owe you no thanks,' interrupted a Suffragette.

Mr. Asquith began again, but 'Taxation without representation is tyranny,' from another Suffragette, silenced him anew. She, like the first, was ejected, but not before she had challenged him: 'What about Mrs. Pankhurst in Holloway?'

The bazaar had now become a bear-garden. The women protesters needed all their habitual courage. Ejections were made, according to a Press report, with 'the use of what, in the opinion of some impartial observers, seemed unnecessary force'.

The protests of the women and the uproar of the audience were renewed again and again. Finally the police were called in. It was not a bazaar opening at all, but a political battle.

Not long before, a veritable riot had occurred in Leeds. Unheard-of precautions had been taken to exclude from Mr. Asquith's meeting in Leeds any woman who might ask him about the vote.

Mrs. Baines, who headed the militant forces, had been in the Salvation Army and had all the devotion and fire and earnest utterance characteristic of the Army workers. Her deep, powerful voice made her one of our finest open-air speakers, and it served her well that day. She challenged the Prime Minister as he descended from the train—as he issued from the railway station. The crowd supported her by a great cheer and

then followed her to the Coliseum where another dense crowd was assembled to support the women.

Mounting an improvised platform, Mrs. Baines announced that she would attempt to fight her way into his meeting. 'If they will not give us a hearing, we will get inside the hall and make them.' Followed by her colleagues, and by the crowd, she led on to the doors where police barred the way and arrested her and four others.

Another of our epoch-making trials arose out of this—the first Suffragette trial by jury. Mr. Asquith, who was, after all, the responsible cause of her being on trial, was subpoenaed as a witness, but he successfully¹ applied to have the subpoena set aside. At the Leeds Assizes Mrs. Baines, who was defended by Mr. Pethick-Lawrence, was charged with unlawful assembly, and inciting to riot and sedition. This trial gave a magnificent opportunity, fully used by Mrs. Baines and by Mr. Pethick-Lawrence, to set forth the justice of our cause and the motive and proven political necessity of militancy. The judge, in summing up, directed the jury if they found, as a matter of fact, that Mrs. Baines intended to use force and violence to enter the Coliseum, and had called upon people to assist her in this design, they must find her guilty. So directed, the jury returned a verdict of 'guilty' and Mrs. Baines, refusing to be bound over, was imprisoned for six weeks.

News reached us in prison that Mr. Lloyd George was to speak on woman suffrage to a meeting of the Women's Liberal Association in the Albert Hall. 'Is it peace?' we asked, as they say at the Welsh Eisteddfod. Had a change of mind and purpose come to the Government? Was Mr. Lloyd George going to give a message of reconciliation between women and the Government of which he was so powerful a member?

While the militants were wondering what Mr. Lloyd George was going to say at the Albert Hall, Mr. Lloyd George was wondering what the militants were going to do there. Emissaries made overtures to the W.S.P.U. with a view to securing peace at the meeting. The W.S.P.U. was more than willing, but it must be a real peace, not a one-sided truce, of which Mr. Lloyd George, as Government spokesman, would

¹ In the Lord Chancellor's Court where both the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General appeared on behalf of Mr. Asquith to oppose my submission that he was an important witness for Mrs. Baines because from his seat on the platform at the meeting he would have seen a riot in the street if there had been one.—Ed.

get all the benefit. Mother held that if Mr. Lloyd George intended merely to repeat, with whatever embellishment of phrase, the same delusive and offensive proposition already made by Mr. Asquith and indignantly rejected by us, then we should certainly express our indignation.

Even before the meeting it was evident that Mr. Lloyd George would indeed say nothing better than Mr. Asquith had already said. A great protest was necessary. The militant women were seated in all parts of the hall in readiness to applaud and joyously receive the Government's last-minute change of heart and policy, should Mr. Lloyd George announce that; but to utter their indignant protest, should he simply repeat the dangerous and insulting proposition which Mr. Asquith had already made in the House of Commons.

The Liberal emissaries, who asked the Suffragettes to refrain from protest, could perfectly well have intimated that another and better Government policy regarding votes for women would be declared. They intimated no such thing, nor, alas! did Mr. Lloyd George himself in his reply to the inquiry sent to him by our honorary secretary.

On the eve of his speech the W.S.P.U. wrote to him: 'It is a matter of great regret that the Government do not yet realize the necessity of action in the matter of woman suffrage. Their continued refusal to enfranchise women—a refusal for which you as a Cabinet Minister are jointly responsible—forces women to adopt militant methods,' and added: 'Women have seen the futility of mere words of sympathy on the part of any member of the Cabinet.' 'The leaders of this Union,' wrote Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, editorially, 'have been asked to use their influence to restrain women from heckling Mr. Lloyd George next Saturday. We have answered that we cannot do so unless Mr. Lloyd George comes forward with a promise from the Government to deal with the enfranchisement of women immediately.'

The day came. Mr. Lloyd George congratulated the Liberal women who had convened the meeting upon the size and spirit of the gathering and upon their sagacity in taking the collection 'before the arrangements could possibly be upset by the rising of a Cabinet Minister'.

'We women'—a woman here tried to state the reason why Cabinet Ministers were such a factor of disturbance, but the usual uproar drowned her voice. The *Manchester Guardian* next day reported that despite printed instructions issued by the Liberal women that stewards should do no violence to any person, and that the audience should be

'silent and steady under fire', stewards in many instances turned out the women protesters with 'a brutality that was nauseating and the audience played up to them'. The first woman ejected had, in view of such a possibility, brought a dog-whip and laid about her with this, in response to what she considered excessively forcible treatment by the men stewards. A woman Liberal then intervened and took her under protection.

Mr. Lloyd George was long in coming to the point, namely what, if any, new message he had brought from the Government. To that audience of women unanimously claiming the vote he sought to expound the reasons why they should have it. 'Are you going to *give* us the vote?' was the very proper interjection of the militants. 'We want deeds, not words!' During one stormy interval the organist made his contribution to the debate with 'O dear, what can the matter be!'

The chairman then arose to say that Mr. Lloyd George had an important message from the Government and this would be the last chance the meeting would have of hearing it. A breathless calm fell upon the meeting, for the Suffragettes wanted to hear that message. But the speaker again merely discussed the theoretical reasons why women should have votes. Time was passing and no message yet. The Suffragettes present, out of all their experience of Cabinet Ministers' ways, became anxious!

'The message, the message!' they cried. 'Let us have this Government message and then we shall have quiet!' Still the well-known arguments for woman suffrage in the abstract. 'Come to the point!' rose protesting cries. The manager of the hall now suggested that the meeting be closed, but after a platform consultation the proceedings were resumed.

Mr. Lloyd George wished to give reasons, he said, why he thought the present Parliament would come to the conclusion that women had a right to vote and why he thought that conclusion would be incorporated in an Act of Parliament. He seemed to forget that the present House of Commons had already concluded that women had a right to the vote and had passed the second reading of a Woman Suffrage Bill which was at that very time blocked by the opposition of his own Government. A woman, whose cloak till then had covered a prison dress, brought the proceedings to a point by saying with a singularly loud and clear voice: 'We have come to hear the Government's message: please *give* us the message.' Queen Elizabeth then engaged Mr. Lloyd

George's attention. 'If Queen Elizabeth,' he said, 'had been alive today she——' 'would have been in Holloway prison!' said a Suffragette.

The message at last came. It was the same story already told by the Prime Minister. A majority of Liberal M.P.s and of the Liberal Cabinet was favourable to woman suffrage. The Prime Minister had declared it to be an open question for the Cabinet as well as for the House of Commons, and it was that declaration, said Mr. Lloyd George, which enabled him and several of the Cabinet, without imputation of disloyalty, to vote in the House of Commons for the inclusion of women in the Government Enfranchisement Bill to be submitted to the present Parliament. The Prime Minister had pledged himself to bring in an Electoral Reform Bill and had said that if an amendment were carried to include woman suffrage the Government could hardly resist it, and the matter would be left to the decision of the House of Commons. That inevitably meant that women suffrage would be included in the Bill and that, from that moment, it would be part and parcel of the Bill.

One sequel to the Albert Hall meeting was Mr. Lloyd George's announcement that in future all women would be excluded from his meetings.

His first womanless public meeting was in Liverpool. 'It is no exaggeration to say that Mr. Lloyd George's pronouncement that he would not fulfil his Liverpool engagement if ladies were admitted fell like a bombshell into the Liberal camp,' reported the *Daily Dispatch*, 'for tickets to the gentler sex had been issued in hundreds.' Although on this occasion our women were unable to get into the hall, a megaphone enabled the call for 'Votes for Women', directed from a building opposite, to be heard by the speakers on arrival at the hall, and even to echo inside. Crowds assembling in the street were addressed by our speakers and cheers were raised for the women imprisoned for the cause.

Though women were excluded from the hall, their question was not. For suddenly, just as Mr. Lloyd George had said that if the House of Lords continued to oppose Liberal measures the people would be driven to use unconstitutional methods, came the interjection: 'In the same way that your action has driven women to use unconstitutional methods.' To keep the votes-for-women question out of meetings would have necessitated the barring of men as well as women and

speaking to empty seats. Many brave men, from that day, risked insult and broken heads, and even their livelihood, by challenging delinquent Liberal leaders on the issue of votes for women.

We in prison had heard of the welcome given to prisoners released before ourselves, of the Chelmsford by-election campaign in which Suffragettes in prison dress took part; of our great Albert Hall meeting at which a £50,000 fighting fund was generously launched, and thousands of women pledged their renewed devotion to the cause.

My release from Holloway was due on 22nd December, but Mother's rather longer sentence would keep her still in prison on Christmas Day. However, the Government relented, and Mother and Mrs. Leigh were also released, to the general joy.

Mother and I were drawn in a procession from Holloway to a gathering of welcome. One of the happiest days in the whole movement was this. Confidence, unity, enthusiasm were complete. A great year had ended. The beloved W.S.P.U. had winged its way through storm and stress, further and higher towards its great aim. Each woman in our army of justice had done, had given, had been her best. All had known the pure delight of a self-regardless service and a self-transcending purpose.

A wonderful Christmas was ours on that day of reunion. We were all thanks to the Pethick-Lawrences, and the rest for their splendid achievements in our absence, and they were all welcome for us. A great meeting had been arranged at which Mother, who had not expected to be out of prison so soon and suddenly, spoke briefly, in praise of all that the Union had done during her imprisonment, reserving a longer discourse until the further meeting planned in her honour for the New Year.

'No, we did not undertake this campaign in any light and heedless spirit,' I said. 'We knew that we had to face danger, sheer physical danger. We knew we faced imprisonment.'

'Yes, we live in a great Christian country among people whose mind is always turning back towards One who paid in greater measure than we have done the price of purchasing the redemption of others. . . . Even if we had no hope of success, even though our militant campaign were destined to failure, we should go on with it. So long as we have life we shall never renounce this struggle. But we are going to win, for we have right on our side, our quarrel is just.'

The gathering dispersed. Another year's campaign was ended.

Opponents and 'Postponents'—Pestering Ministers Crescendo!—Hunger-Strike and Stone-Throwing—Petitioning the Prime Minister—The Men's Political Union—Gathering Storm of Protest—Forcible Feeding—Lady Constance Lytton.

THE New Year was not a week old when the Suffragettes mustered in strength to renew their challenge to the Liberal Government, to the opponents of votes for women, such as Mr. Asquith, and to the 'postponents', as we then first dubbed them, such as Mr. Lloyd George and Sir Edward Grey. The postponents were asked to remember, as W. E. Gladstone had it, that 'Justice delayed is justice denied'.

Mrs. Pankhurst, in her first public utterance of 1909, recalled that it was twenty-nine years since she had joined the executive committee of the North of England Society for Women's Suffrage, and said that, by her experience in the first twenty-five of these years, of what were commonly called constitutional methods, she had learnt that only militant methods were effectual.

This first great occasion in 1909 was the gathering at the Queen's Hall held to celebrate the release from prison of Mother and Mrs. Leigh. A veteran Suffragist, Miss Clara Evelyn Mordan, a pioneer in the higher education of women, whose bequest to St. Hugh's College, Oxford, is memorable, was deputed to present to Mother a beautiful necklace, showing the purple, white, and green colours of our Union. The meeting was a council of war, also, and Mother as supreme commander of our forces delivered to the Government her ultimatum for 1909. The next General Election was already looming faintly on the political horizon. The more need and reason then to urge the immediate grant of women's votes.

Lord Crewe fired the first shot that year in the suffrage war between

the Government and the women, a shot which shattered the lath and plaster suffrage 'pledge' offered by Mr. Asquith and Mr. Lloyd George. Interrogated by Suffragettes at a public meeting, Lord Crewe denied that more votes would be given even to men and denounced the 'deplorable ignorance of how public affairs are carried on in this country', of 'anyone who supposes that the Government could, in the present Parliament, bring in a Bill making so great a constitutional change as that envisaged by the suggested Reform Bill. This "deplorable ignorance",' said he, 'encourages one to doubt of the fitness of such a person to exercise any political function at all.' His words were hardly complimentary to his colleagues and proved anew the wisdom of our refusal to accept the Government's proffered pledge.

The Prime Minister was now requested to receive a small deputation that would submit to him the reason why woman suffrage should be the subject of immediate Government action. We remarked in our letter: 'We are of opinion that the question of women's enfranchisement should be dealt with on its own merits and by means of a separate and distinct measure, to be enacted before a Reform Bill is introduced affecting the franchise as a whole. If this were done and the votes for women issue thus satisfactorily disposed of, the subsequent task of simplifying and improving the electoral machinery would be greatly facilitated.'

If, as we explained to the public, Mr. Asquith should agree to our plea, the Liberal Government would have the vigorous support of women in carrying the Women's Enfranchisement Bill. The Prime Minister replied that he 'did not think any useful purpose would be served by receiving a deputation on the subject of the franchise'. Our published comment was that: 'Mr. Asquith's refusal of this reasonable request will meet with general disapproval. Since he became Prime Minister, he has never once received a woman suffrage deputation although he has been asked to do so by Suffragists, both militant and non-militant.'

Deprived of the conventional means of communication with the Prime Minister, unconventional means of communication were all that remained. The Cabinet was to meet to consider the King's Speech, and a W.S.P.U. deputation went to 10 Downing Street. Passing in a cab through the cordon of police which guarded Downing Street, they gained admission to the Prime Minister's official residence, and one woman—Miss Douglas Smith—nearly managed to get into the pres-

ence of the Cabinet. Mother's sister, Mrs. Clarke, was arrested with Misses Douglas Smith, Irene Dallas, and Frances Satterley.

The pestering of Cabinet Ministers was all this time proceeding in various parts of the country. One of the postponents, Mr. Haldane, the Secretary for War, was challenged at Preston railway station by a Suffragette who asked him when the Government would give women the vote. He replied: 'Why don't you talk to Mr. Asquith?' At Birmingham Mr. Haldane's carriage was surrounded by women demanding the vote, his hotel was surmounted by a large 'Votes for Women' flag. At New Street station, a Suffragette asked him: 'Will votes for women be in the King's Speech?' At Euston police were in waiting to protect him from the women. At the Mansion House, where Mr. Haldane spoke in the same week, a woman's voice called out: 'We have heard you; now hear us. What about votes for women!'

We held another great meeting in the Manchester Free Trade Hall, to which we returned always with special zest. Replying to a favourite anti-suffrage argument that women could not fight, one of our speakers remarked that there was more fight in some women than in some men, and instanced the case of the Minister for War and his many and various efforts to escape or take police protection.

Womanless meetings were now the rule for Cabinet Ministers, and to gain entrance to these meetings or to waylay and question Ministers taxed Suffragette ingenuity to the uttermost. But some protest was always accomplished, and Cabinet Ministers could not avoid sight and hearing of the militant women during their political progress.

Mr. Winston Churchill's experience at Newcastle-on-Tyne was typical. The Hon. Mrs. Taylor of Chipchase Castle, a Liberal woman in revolt against the Liberal Government because of their treatment of the woman's cause, wrote to him thus:

Dear Sir,

I expect that you will be troubled by the Suffragettes when in Newcastle. I have been a Liberal all my life until last summer when—realizing through Mr. Asquith's pronouncement about the Reform Bill that the Liberal Government did not intend to take Woman Suffrage in hand by directly including it in the Reform Bill—I joined the Women's Social and Political Union and helped all I could at the Newcastle by-election to keep the Liberal out—in which we succeeded.

Women like myself are being driven out from the Liberal ranks all over England by the action of the Government as regards Woman Suffrage, and all our time and money are used against—instead of for—the Liberals. I now give half my personal income to work against the Government as a Suffragette.

We feel perhaps almost more bitter against those of the Cabinet who are, in the abstract, in favour of woman suffrage, for we know that, *if they wished*, they could—being in the majority—cause Woman Suffrage to become part of the Liberal Reform Bill or to be brought in as a separate Measure.

Why continue to oblige us to fight you?

Yours truly,

MONA TAYLOR

Mr. Churchill was questioned on leaving the train, at the door of his hotel, on leaving for the Assembly Rooms, on arrival at the reception held there. As he entered the ballroom: 'Remember votes for women' greeted him. 'Will votes for women be in the King's Speech?' was asked and asked again. 'Mr. Churchill, give me your word of honour that votes for women will be in the King's Speech,' said one woman.

At the Chamber of Commerce banquet, he was met by more questioning women. The feast was at its height when Suffragettes entered the large banqueting hall and, with the aid of a megaphone, urged their demand.

Meantime, the avowed anti-Suffragists in the Cabinet were showing that Mr. Asquith's offer to women, as countersigned by Mr. Lloyd George, was, if possible, even more unprofitable than we already supposed it to be. Lord Crewe had led in this, and Mr. Lewis Harcourt insisted that, if the Government's Reform Bill should be so amended to give votes to women, the Government would not support the amended Reform Bill as a whole, but only that part of it applying to men.

Parliament met. The King's Speech said nothing of the Suffrage, whether for men or women. A Parliament of Women was announced. 'A deputation of women will wait on you at the House of Commons tomorrow evening to ask for the inclusion of woman suffrage in the legislative programme of the Government of the present Session,' wrote Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence to Mr. Asquith, who replied that he had nothing to add to his past statements and thought no advantage would

accrue from his receiving the deputation, and that at the time appointed, he had an engagement elsewhere.

This prior engagement was, it appeared, of a social character and, therefore, Mrs. Lawrence asserted, could afford no sufficient reason for refusing to meet the women's deputation. Mr. Asquith himself sent this correspondence to *The Times* for publication.

A flash of humour was provided just then, thanks to a Post Office regulation permitting the posting and transmission of human letters. Two Suffragettes were duly posted as human express letters, at the regulation charge, addressed to the Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street, and were led by a telegraph boy to their destination, where, however, acceptance was refused. 'You must be returned: you are dead letters,' said Mr. Asquith's butler.

Since the Prime Minister would appoint no time and place to receive her deputation, Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence appointed both. Mother returned from the Scottish by-election then in progress to speed the deputation on their way. Again Holloway received its prisoners, for Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence was arrested and with her, Lady Constance Lytton, grand-daughter of Bulwer Lytton, daughter of a former Viceroy of India, sister of the Earl of Lytton, sister-in-law of Mr. Gerald Balfour (brother of Mr. Arthur—after Lord—Balfour). Her arrest had a great repercussion. Among others arrested were Miss Daisy Solomon, daughter of a late Prime Minister of the Cape, Miss Una Stratford-Dugdale, Miss Margaret Davies-Colley, Miss (now Commandant) Mary Allen, Miss Elsa Gye, Miss Leslie Lawless, Miss Caroline Townend, and Mrs. Lamartine Yates.

Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence explained in the dock that she as a social worker had formerly visited Police Courts and prisons as a helper of the helpless. 'We have,' she declared, 'broken no moral law nor even a constitutional law, for to present petitions is an ancient privilege and an acknowledged custom of the unrepresented and unenfranchised.'

Lady Constance Lytton argued that: 'The Government refused to receive our deputation on the grounds that they are not prepared to grant our request: yet that is the best reason why we should have an opportunity of explaining to them the nature of our demand.' She declared herself more proud of standing there in the dock with her friends than she had ever been of anything in her life.

A striking Government defeat in the Glasgow by-election now occurred. Mother had been dividing her energy between four

simultaneous Scottish election campaigns, and Glasgow led the way in finding the Government guilty. It was a magnificent popular message of support for the arrested and imprisoned women.

'Where are the women of England? Have you locked them all up?' loudly demanded a man's voice at Mr. Asquith's meeting in the Queen's Hall, from which all women had with infinite precaution been excluded. Another and another man arose with questions and were ejected with even greater violence.

Cabinet Ministers were almost driven underground, for their public appearances were invariably marred by the rightfully indignant protests of women, or of men who were upholding the women's cause.

Mrs. Pankhurst was making a triumphal progress through Lancashire, rallying public support in her native county for the fight with the Government. Her constitutional and educational work throughout the country was ever increasing.

Another deputation from the W.S.P.U. led by Mrs. Saul Solomon, widow of the late Prime Minister of the Cape, now attempted to see Mr. Asquith, but again in vain. On the day following, Mrs. Eates and Mrs. Reinold renewed their attempt, the affair being witnessed by at least one Cabinet Minister from behind the Parliamentary railings. Imprisonment followed. Parliamentary questions about the treatment of our prisoners were many, Mr. Balfour himself entering the lists.

A notable and timely victory was ours at the Croydon by-election, celebrated by *Punch* in a cartoon depicting the Government candidate chased from the constituency by the Suffragettes.

The prison brooch thenceforth to be worn as a badge of honour by our prisoners was now adopted. It was designed by Sylvia, and showed silver bars and chains, and a broad arrow in our colours, purple, white, and green.

A large company greeted Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence on her release from Holloway and followed her to the scene of the customary prisoners' breakfast. Next day the rejoicings were renewed and a procession with Joan of Arc riding at the head attended her to the Aldwych Theatre. At the meeting that followed, a new deputation to the Prime Minister was announced for June and, with great effect, Mrs. Lawrence, as one just out of prison, appealed to women to volunteer for deputation duty.

A Votes for Women Bill could not in 1909 come to a second reading in the House of Commons, because none of its supporters drew a

place in the ballot for private members' Bills. A supporter of the Government drew a red-herring across the path, by bringing in an omnibus suffrage measure in which the issue of women's enfranchisement was entangled with, and indeed strangled by, proposals for revolutionizing the franchise as a whole. Militants and non-militants alike repudiated this Bill. It passed second reading by a majority of 35 votes—far less than the previous year's majority for woman suffrage pure and simple, and that was the end of it.

The Government now brought forth a new Coercion Bill for use against the Suffragettes, the Cabinet being united on that issue though not on votes for women! This 'Houses of Parliament Bill' proposed that interruptions and other offences by strangers in the Houses of Parliament, while Lords or Commons were in Session, should be made punishable by a magistrate, and not as theretofore by Parliament itself, a great departure from ancient ways.

This new Bill collapsed. The *coup de grâce* was given to it by Sir Edward Carson. 'There is likely to be a great deal of ironic laughter,' thought the *Daily Telegraph*, 'at the fate which has befallen the Houses of Parliament Bill.'

Militant comment on the ill-fated measure was made known when Suffragettes chained themselves to the statues in St. Stephen's Hall and, availing themselves of the time taken by the officials to break the chains, spoke to the Members of Parliament who flocked to the scene, in firm and dignified protest against the disfranchisement of women.

How shall I give the picture of all that was doing for the vote in those days? The movement went always crescendo! The peaceful side of our work—the indoor and outdoor meetings, correspondence, distribution of literature, paper-selling, processions, demonstrations, interviews, by-election campaigns—increased and multiplied throughout the years. Mrs. Pankhurst seemed to be in all parts of the land at once. What was Gladstone's Midlothian campaign compared to her national campaign! The Gladstones, the Chamberlains, the Asquiths and Lloyd Georges have ever been aided by the steady support of Party newspapers circulating throughout the country and by long-established Party organization. Mrs. Pankhurst, without any newspaper support, except incidental, occasional support, conquered simply by the irresistible appeal of her devotion and courage and, lacking all those other aids

given to Party political leaders, stirred womanhood and stirred the whole nation.

Our organizers must have their tribute. Young for the most part, some very young, their many achievements might astonish the girls and young women of the present day. Not the most modern and capable of post-war youth could surpass those young organizers of ours, to whom I send back through the years my loving thanks and salutation. They were willing to sacrifice all, and attempt all, for the cause. Sent, it might be, to some outpost in North, South, East, or West of the country, they would plant the flag, take an office, interview the Press, call upon the leading women of the place, visit the various organizations, political, social and philanthropic, tell the police they had arrived, announce meetings, and, after chalking pavements, selling the *Votes for Women* paper and distributing handbills, would address meetings, enrol members, arrange more meetings, write to or interview the local Member, or plan protests in preparation for Cabinet Ministers' visits, organize by-election campaigns—and in addition to all, raise the money for their own campaign and have a balance to send to the Central treasury! Their political understanding made them equal to every occasion. They could address five thousand people with perfect equanimity and could win the day in every argument with opponents and postponents even were these Mr. Asquith, Mr. Lloyd George, or Mr. Winston Churchill.

Without vanity and self-centredness as they were, the political fame they deservedly won did not turn the wise heads on their young shoulders. They consecrated themselves to a great cause in which self was lost. Scorning delights, they lived laborious days and joyed in doing it, finding their happiness in present service and future victory. To parry any charge of 'unwomanliness', 'extreme views', and so forth, conformity to convention in all but militancy was the rule. Over and above this manifold toil, responsibility and devotion, rendered if they could voluntarily and otherwise for what might be termed out-of-pocket expenses, our splendid organizers were ready at any moment to risk possible injury from politically excited mobs or to face arrest and imprisonment.

London was alive with Suffragette activity. Albert Hall meetings twice a year or more, meetings in the large Queen's Hall every Monday afternoon, weekly mass meetings in Hyde Park, the super-bazaars we called exhibitions, while meetings without number, in every London borough, were added to the central activities of the W.S.P.U.

The so-called constitutional aspect of the work of Mrs. Pankhurst and her followers, which in all these years exceeded that of any other movement, Suffragist or otherwise, can never be too much emphasized, because of the historically false impression given by some persons that our movement was only militant, while the constitutional and educational work for the women's vote was done by others.

As to the militant effort of 1909, it surpassed all that went before. Deputations were more frequent, imprisonments far more numerous, protests in Parliament increased, and of challenges to Cabinet Ministers one could lose all count!

The womanless-meeting policy adopted by Cabinet Ministers moved the Suffragettes to more ingenious and adventurous ways of getting into their meetings.

'Daring Suffragist interviewed—Miss Phillips' "Recital" under an Organ . . .' thus the *Liverpool Echo* headed a detailed account of the experience of Lord Crewe and Mr. Birrell when they visited Liverpool to receive honorary degrees. A chorus of 'Votes for Women' from University students greeted the two Ministers as they appeared on the platform. As Mr. Birrell rose to speak, a voice belonging to some invisible woman made a loud and quite long discourse on votes for women and the misdoing of the Government in preferring to imprison women rather than enfranchise them. Consternation reigned on the platform, search was made, and our organizer was found crouching beneath the organ, where she had been since eight o'clock of the evening before!

When Mr. Asquith arrived to speak in Sheffield he found a state of siege. The hoardings were posted with bills headed 'Warning', giving the text of the Public Meetings Bill.

The meeting 'could not,' said the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 'be called a success. The Prime Minister was dull, those inside were wishing they could get out and thousands outside were clamouring to get in.'

'It is not a very dignified proceeding,' remarked the *Yorkshire Telegraph*, 'to have to smuggle a Prime Minister into the city, yet that was the sort of triumphal entry Mr. Asquith made'.

Manchester proved that keeping militant women out of Cabinet Ministers' meetings was no easy matter and the attempt to do so caused indignant protests from influential Liberal women, including Miss Margaret Ashton, a member of the Manchester City Council and sister of

Lord Ashton of Hyde, and Miss Bertha Mason, daughter of a late Liberal M.P. of great influence in Lancashire. All over the country, by trying to keep the Suffragettes out of their meetings, the Liberal leaders were driving women out of the Liberal Party.

While Manchester Liberalism was thus disturbed from within, the Suffragettes prepared an elaborate reception for Mr. Churchill. He was seen off by Suffragettes at St. Pancras, met as he stepped from the train in Manchester, interviewed as he entered his taxicab, as he reached the Reform Club, and later at the entrance to the Free Trade Hall. Driving from one point to another, he was followed in a pursuing cab by Suffragettes who megaphoned a continuous message on the question of the vote.

Careful seekers had found several Suffragettes in the Free Trade Hall, of whom one had been hiding in a box all through the previous night. Impossible therefore that the Suffragettes could trouble the meeting. And yet they did, for in spite of all the precautions that had so disturbed the Liberal atmosphere of the city, two Suffragettes had entered the hall and escaped discovery by crouching for hours behind a screen. Mr. Churchill had not said many words before that dreadful challenge 'Votes for Women' stirred the meeting to the usual tumult. After each of the women had been, in turn, flung out of the hall, some half-dozen men at different points interjected questions about the Government's dealing with votes for women.

The enormous difficulty of entering Cabinet Ministers' meetings caused the Suffragettes to use such informal occasions of interrogating them as Mr. Asquith's holiday at Clovelly. Three resourceful Suffragettes, Jessie Kenney, Elsie Howey, and Vera Wentworth, followed him thither. In church on Sunday morning they found themselves quite near Mr. Asquith, who, apprised by Mrs. Asquith of their close presence, looked anxious indeed, until at the close of the service he hastily left through a side door.

Mr. Asquith was staying for the week-end at Clovelly Court and his entire visit was overshadowed by the Suffragettes' insistent questioning. On the golf links, in the grounds of Clovelly Court, they haunted him. Evading the detectives they found Mr. Asquith on the links, and holding him firmly by the arm, they as firmly spoke their mind and exhorted him to receive the forthcoming deputation of women, while Mr. Asquith's fellow guests looked on and listened with the greatest interest. The police then intervened, and our three Suffragettes left for



Olive Fergus, Mr. Asquith, Sir Edward Grey, Mrs. Frank Corbet



Fred and Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence going to the Law Courts
for Mrs. Baines

Bideford, luggage and all, being given a great send-off by the inhabitants who had greatly relished their encounter with the Prime Minister. Returning on foot to Clovelly Court in the small hours of the morning, they decorated the grounds with purple, white, and green. 'Mr. Asquith's unhappy experience with the Clovelly importation of Suffragettes will,' said the *Bristol Times and Mirror*, 'compel him to keep from public knowledge the locality he may favour for a holiday.'

'It is the right of the subject to petition the King and all commitments and prosecutions for such petitioning are illegal.' The Bill of Rights thus declares, and strong in her sense of the right, Mrs. Pankhurst determined again to go in deputation to petition the King's Prime Minister.

As Deputation Day approached, our activities waxed greater. The longest Suffragette sentence yet imposed came to an end with the release of Patricia Woodlock of Liverpool after three months' imprisonment in Holloway Gaol. The Suffragette drum and fife band made its *début* at the welcome given to her. London was snowed under with the deputation handbill bearing these words:

A Deputation of Women
will go to the
House of Commons
to see
The Prime Minister

and lay before him their demand for the vote. Their right to do this is secured to them by the

Bill of Rights

which says: 'It is the right of the subject to petition the King and all commitments and prosecutions for such petitioning are illegal.' Mr. Asquith, as the King's representative, is therefore bound to receive the deputation and hear their petition. If he refuses to do so and calls out the police to prevent women from using their right to present a petition, he will be guilty of illegal and unconstitutional action.

Now happened something destined to have far-reaching influence on the militant movement, for it led to the adoption of the hunger-strike. One of our members, Miss Wallace Dunlop, an artist of very resourceful mind, entered the House of Commons and stencilled in

large letters on the wall of St. Stephen's Hall this aide-mémoire to the Government and Members of Parliament:

Women's Deputation June 29th. It is the right of the subject to petition the King, and all commitments and prosecutions for such petitioning are illegal.

So sudden was her act that the police could not reach her in time to prevent her. Miss Wallace Dunlop was ejected from the House. Two hours were needed to remove that unwelcome inscription.

Hoping to avert the assembling of the crowds which had in the past supported the militant women in Parliament Square, the authorities issued a warning to the public not to gather there on 29th June. Nevertheless the people came.

Public interest in this deputation was higher than in any of the earlier ones. The newspapers were full of it—Scotland Yard's warning of danger had no effect. Never was such a multitude, and the people were bent on seeing fair play for the Suffragettes. Mrs. Pankhurst was accompanied by Mrs. Mansel, Mrs. Saul Solomon, the Hon. Mrs. Haverfield, Miss Neligan, Mrs. Corbett, Miss Maud Joachim, and Miss Margesson (afterwards Lady Cushendun). Each woman held a copy of the petition to be presented to Mr. Asquith. Unhindered at first, they moved forward through the dense crowd which parted to let them pass. It was a slow progress, and one of those following Mother was frail, and seventy-six years old. But it was a triumphal progress, because the people in their thousands were cheering and raising shouts of goodwill.

The war correspondent Mr. H. W. Nevinson, with all his experience of stirring and poignant scenes and events in many lands, declared: 'I have seldom witnessed so splendid a personal triumph. The deputation was small. They walked two deep and in the second row were two ladies, old and grey; the others followed, bright with the colours. But alone, in front of them all, walked Mrs. Pankhurst, pale, but proud and perfectly calm, with that look of courage and persistency on her face which I should not like my enemies to wear. The crowd received her with overwhelming enthusiasm. I doubt if there is any man or woman now living in England who would have been given such a reception as that.'

Mother's own account of what then followed was thus:

'The deputation pressed on through the crowd as far as Parliament Square. We paused for a moment, gathering strength for the ordeal of trying to push through the lines, when an unexpected thing happened. An order was given and instantly the police lines parted, leaving a clear space through which we walked towards the House. We were escorted on our way by Police Superintendent Wells and as we passed, the crowd broke into vociferous cheering, firmly believing, that we were after all to be received. There we encountered another strong force of police commanded by Inspector Scantlebury who stepped forward and handed me a letter. I opened it and read it aloud: "The Prime Minister, for the reasons which he has already given, regrets that he is unable to receive the proposed deputation." I dropped the note to the ground and said: "I stand upon my rights as a Subject of the King to petition the Prime Minister and I am firmly resolved to stand here until I am received." I turned to several Members of Parliament who stood looking on, and begged them to take my message to the Prime Minister, but no one responded and Inspector Jarvis, seizing my arm, began to push me away. I knew now that the deputation would not be received and that the old miserable business of refusing to leave, of being forced backward, and returning again and again until arrested, would have to be re-enacted. I had to take into account that I was accompanied by two fragile old ladies who, brave as they were to be there at all, could not possibly endure what I knew would follow. So I committed an act of technical assault on the person of Inspector Jarvis, striking him very lightly on the cheek. He said instantly: "I understand why you did that," and I supposed then that we should be immediately taken. But the other police apparently did not grasp the situation for they began pushing and jostling our women. I said to the Inspector: 'Shall I have to do it again?' and he said "Yes." So I struck him lightly a second time and then he ordered the police to make the arrests.'

Other women who had gathered at Caxton Hall were then also making their way, in ones and twos, to the scene of action. The police, in very large force, mounted and on foot, were battling with the women, and the crowds who supported the women. At last, Parliament Square was entirely cleared and closed by cordons of police. More than a hundred of our women were arrested. Stone-throwing again occurred that night, some of the women, after vainly struggling to get to the House of Commons, resolving to make their protest in an easier and surer fashion. They delivered the petition by wrapping a copy thereof

of it round stones which they flung through the windows of the Home Office, and other Government buildings.

In the House of Commons that night the demonstration was the dominating thought and fact. Mr. A. J. Balfour, Sir Edward Grey, and Mr. Austen Chamberlain, as well as many other Members of the House, had been eye-witnesses of the scene outside. They had been able to observe, as had the newspapers, that 'the sympathy of the crowd was with the women'.

Several Suffragists early arrested were, the Press stated, 'walked by the police, one on each side, between the lines of M.P.s who treated them courteously, but an accidental smile aroused one woman to say rather bitterly: "It may amuse you, but it doesn't amuse us." It had seemed unnecessary to march the women through Members in such a public fashion.

'May I ask the Home Secretary [Mr. Gladstone] if he would represent to the Prime Minister that it would be for the general convenience of Members of the House, and to the public at large, if he dropped the Budget and gave votes for women?' asked Mr. Willie Redmond, M.P., while Mr. Keir Hardie drew from the Speaker the admission that 'there is no doubt that the public have a right of petitioning'. Mr. Hugh Law moved the adjournment of the House 'on a matter of definite public importance, namely the refusal of the Prime Minister to receive the deputation and the consequent grave and immediate danger to the public peace', but the Speaker would not have it.

The constitutional right of petition was, at their trial, urged in defence of the arrested women. Mrs. Haverfield was defended by Counsel in order that the legal aspect of the case might be fully dealt with. Mr. Henlé, defending her, argued that the Statute 13 Charles II cap. 5, in regulating its exercise, recognized and confirmed the right of petition and allowed persons not exceeding the number of ten to present a petition, grievance, or complaint to any Member of Parliament or to the King's Majesty, for any remedy to be thereupon had, and this during the sitting of Parliament.

'These ladies were in the act of and standing upon their right of petitioning the King's representative, the Prime Minister.' Having a right to be at the House of Commons to present their petition, they could not be accused of causing an obstruction because their right was denied. The obstruction was caused by those who prevented the petitioners from exercising their right.

The magistrate said that he would like time to consider points raised by Counsel. Mother then urged that the right of petition was much more important to women than to men, because whereas men had the vote as a means to redress of their grievances, women, by reason of their voteless condition, were deprived of all other means of redress.

Lord Robert Cecil, K.C. (now Viscount Cecil of Chelwood), appeared for Mrs. Haverfield, when the trial was resumed. Endorsing Mr. Henlé's argument, he said that the essence of the right to petition is the Sovereign power of the country and that the subject's right is to petition the King and the Parliament alike. 'My client,' said Lord Robert, 'when she was debarred access to the Prime Minister, declined to go away. I submit to you that she was there to present the petition and as she was there asserting a constitutional right, she was not guilty of any offence in doing so.'

Mrs. Pankhurst, speaking in her own defence, showed that never once since he became Prime Minister had Mr. Asquith received women who desired to show him how very seriously the women of this country suffer from their political disabilities. 'We should never have persisted as we have done,' she said, 'had Mr. Asquith consented to receive us on another occasion, as he received a deputation of working men on the question of electoral reform for men.'

'The constitutional issue involved ought not,' said Mrs. Pankhurst, 'to be decided by that Court.' The magistrate was asked by Lord Robert Cecil to state a case for the higher Court and did so. All the women remained for the time being at liberty.

'I wrote these words because I thought they were in danger of being forgotten by our legislators and because I intended that they should be indelible,' said Miss Wallace Dunlop when charged at Bow Street with 'wilful damage', by stencilling on a Parliamentary wall the words of the Bill of Rights. She was sent, in default of paying a fine, to prison for one month.

Thus began the first hunger-strike. It was to have immense consequences. It finally drove the Government, as will appear later, to choose between a harsher coercion of women and the granting of votes. The pioneer of the hunger-strike, Miss Wallace Dunlop, taking counsel with no one and acting entirely on her own initiative, sent to the Home Secretary, Mr. Gladstone, as soon as she entered Holloway Prison, an

application to be placed in the first division as befitted one charged with a political offence. She announced that she would eat no food until this right was conceded. Mr. Gladstone did not reply, but after she had fasted ninety-one hours, Miss Wallace Dunlop was set free. She was in an exhausted state, having refused every threat and appeal to induce her to break her fast.

The stone-throwing case now came on. Miss Ada Cécile Wright's defence of her action explains the motive of all who had made, or would yet make, this form of protest: 'I am quite prepared to stand by what I have done. I went to Parliament Square determined that if my leader was again refused permission to present her petition to Mr. Asquith, I would put my protest into a form which would not be forgotten. I do not believe that my action was morally wrong, but I believe that what I did was my duty, because it was a means of calling attention to the present disgraceful state of affairs due to the obstinate action of the Prime Minister in refusing to act justly by the women of the country. If my action was legally wrong I claim that those men who incited me to this act should be with me in this dock today. Mr. Herbert Gladstone ought to be here, who said in the House of Commons that argument was not enough, but that the women will have to use *force majeure* as men had done to obtain the vote. Mr. Haldane ought to be here, who taunted women with using pin-pricks, and asked them why they did not do something serious; Mr. John Burns ought to be here, who said that "working men had forced open the door at which the ladies were scratching". If they are not to be sent to prison for inciting me, then I ought not to be sent to prison for taking action far more moderate than their words would suggest.'

Arrived at Holloway, the prisoners demanded first division treatment and after protests of a more vigorous nature, resorted to the hunger-strike. The Government well knew that the prisoners would die rather than yield, and after several days they were, one by one, released as their state of weakness caused alarm.

'Coercion defeated,' we said, and declared that we should reserve the right to use the hunger-strike as a protest against the fact of this imprisonment of Suffragists, because while it was undoubtedly wrong to deny to Suffragists the privileges of political offenders, the greater wrong was to imprison them at all.

I foresaw the day when the Government would imprison us, not for weeks or months, but for years, and by holding the leaders espe-

cially, in prison, would attempt to break and obliterate the movement. The hunger-strike, I felt, might be one of our measures in reserve for the frustration of such a policy.

The exclusion of women from meetings prompted men sympathizers to organize themselves in a definite way to heckle Cabinet Ministers on the women's behalf, and the Men's Political Union was formed. Great courage was needed by these truly chivalrous men, for they were treated with little mercy by those mortified by failure to silence the Suffrage demand.

Limehouse, where Mr. Lloyd George made a long-remembered speech, was the scene of a memorable protest by men Suffragists. Two women only were in the meeting, Mrs. Lloyd George and a friend, and they, by advice of the Chair, withdrew when the inevitable tumult began. Hardly had the applause that greeted Mr. Lloyd George subsided when, to quote an eye-witness: 'A man was seen calmly swarming up one of the pillars in the hall. With the utmost coolness and sailor-like agility, he slowly mounted some fifteen feet from the ground, and then uncoiling a rope from his waist, he secured himself to the pillar and contrived for himself a sort of swing seat. By this time, the authorities suspected something was wrong and a strong body of stewards advanced towards the pillar, intent on hauling down the interrupter. But the pillar was guarded by over a dozen good men and true, determined to defend their champion against all comers as long as was humanly possible. While the fight was raging round the pillar, the handyman aloft unfurled a banner of purple, white, and green and a mighty cheer went forth as the Suffragette colours floated forth over the heads of two bewildered Cabinet Ministers. Slowly, battling against overwhelming odds, the defenders of the pillar were one by one wrenched from their posts and thrown out with the utmost brutality and violence. The stewards at last got to the pillar and one of them cut the rope by which our champion had secured himself. Inch by inch he was hauled down after a heroic resistance. Torn along by a press of men, blows and kicks were rained upon him from all sides, and one man deliberately hit him on the head with a glass bottle. His head cut open, covered with blood from head to foot, the hero of the pillar was thrown outside, where the police took him to a friendly doctor to have his wounds dressed.'

At last the Cabinet Minister seemed to have the meeting to himself,

but at this moment there came through the open windows the measured chorus of women's voices, crying aloud 'Votes for Women'. They had entered an adjoining house, and, through megaphones, were uttering their protests which even after the windows had been closed continued to be heard.

The Prime Minister and his colleagues were compelled to risk these Suffragist encounters, because they had embarked upon a Budget campaign of meetings all over the country, which gave the militants a magnificent opportunity. The Prime Minister's meeting in a marquee at Bletchley was an important occasion, though to enter it taxed all the Suffragette resourcefulness. At two o'clock in the morning, our women reached the place and hid nearby until the meeting was in full swing, when they rushed to the tent and raised through megaphones the 'votes for women' cry. One Suffragette, by lashing herself to a tree, was able to make her protest heard all the longer.

Tremendous scenes occurred in Glasgow when the Prime Minister spoke there. One who gained distinction was Alice Paul, the American girl, who served with us the apprenticeship that preceded her remarkable and victorious suffrage campaign in America with Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont, Miss Doris Stevens, and others of the sister militant organization in the United States. Miss Alice Paul gained access to the roof of the St. Andrew's Hall, and hid there all night, drenched to the skin by rain. She and Lucy Burns, another American, and Adela and Margaret Smith, made a protest which stirred the city.

'It may not be war, but it is magnificent after its manner,' declared the *Glasgow Evening Citizen*, paying tribute to the lady on the housetop—willing to wait a night and a day in order to make claim to the vote. The vast crowd that surged round the hall was, according to the *Glasgow Record and Mail*, 'of extraordinary sympathy with the tactics of the women, and cries of "rush the police" and "save the women" resounded through the street.'

In Liverpool, when Mr. Haldane spoke there, the militant women created the usual disturbance. 'The opening sentence of Mr. Haldane's speech had not been completed,' said a newspaper account, 'before something akin to a sensation was caused by the falling of breaking glass and the voice of a steward shouting excitedly, "they are breaking the windows." It was of course the Suffragettes. . . .'

Embarrassing as these protests were to Cabinet Ministers, the women who made them paid the greater price, for they risked injury from those who angrily ejected them from meetings and they were in many cases arrested for their part in the demonstrations. Hunger-striking became general, and while this deepened the effect of the women's protests, it involved added suffering and sacrifice.

The Prime Minister did, however, get wholly the worst of it when the doughty three of Clovelly pursued him to Lympne. Determined, they were, to remind him again that 'he would not have much peace until he had done his duty to the women of the country'. Again a golf course was the scene of their encounter. Mr. Asquith, accompanied by Mr. Gladstone, was seen emerging from the clubhouse. The three ladies approached them, but Mr. Asquith and his colleague tried to escape and instead of a discussion of votes for women, quite a fight ensued, home truths being all the time delivered to the Ministers, who were warned that the leaders of the movement would not be able to control women much longer unless the Government granted the vote. A visit to Lympne Castle was then planned. Voyaging by boat to the landing place, the three made their way to the Castle wall just at dinner-time. One was hoisted up to the window of the dining-room and saw Mr. Asquith and the whole party at table. Leaning through the open window, she called out in a loud voice: 'Mr. Asquith, we shall go on pestering you until you give women the vote.' Stones struck the window by way of parting shots.

I explained in *Votes for Women* that the W.S.P.U. were most careful, as long as it was possible, to abide by the custom which distinguishes a politician's public from his private life, but that the Prime Minister's constant aim was to drive us off the political field. It was on that field alone that we wished to fight out our battle with him, but he and his colleagues would not have it so.

Dundee. A dramatic protest was made when Mr. Herbert Samuel spoke in Dundee. Seething crowds surrounded the hall and only the strongest resistance of a 'solid wall of constables prevented an invasion of the Hall'. While this struggle raged, Miss Isabel Kelley entered the hall by a way of her own. On the previous day she had mounted scaffolding on the adjoining Bank of Scotland, from the roof of which she lowered herself twenty-five feet on to the roof of the hall. There, dressed in a dark gymnasium dress and wrapped in a big cloak, she lay hidden for seventeen long hours, escaping detection by search

parties. Coiled round her waist was a twenty-four-foot rope, having an iron hook at one end and a noose at the other. In the course of the meeting, she let herself down through a skylight in the hall.

Birmingham. A state of siege prevailed in Birmingham when the Prime Minister went there to speak in Bingley Hall. New Street station was strongly guarded. A force of mounted police and numerous other officers of different grades including the Chief Constable were present; even duly accredited representatives of the Press were refused admittance to the platform. 'Various ingenious ruses,' reported the *Birmingham Daily Mail*, 'were adopted to disguise the Premier's movements. He ascended into the Queen's Hotel by the lift which in the ordinary way only descends to the station level for the purpose of taking up luggage.'

According to Press reports, Suffragettes had never held the stage so completely. 'From the very first they made no secret of their determination to render Mr. Asquith's Birmingham visit as unpleasant as possible. By six o'clock the streets leading from the railway station to Bingley Hall were crowded with people and a strong cordon of police stretched from the platform to the doors of the hall. To reach one's destination, one had to undergo the ordeal of a spy in time of war. . . . "Show your ticket" became an incessant word in the streets, and in the immediate vicinity of Bingley Hall barricades had been erected. Every policeman available in the district had been summoned for duty when the Premier arrived at the hall. He had not been speaking five minutes before a man sprang up in the body of the hall and yelled "Votes for Women". Fifty stalwart stewards rushed viciously upon him and he was frog-marched out.

'Every five minutes Mr. Asquith was interrupted. "Was John Stuart Mill a Socialist?" asked Mr. Asquith at one point. "No, sir, he was a champion of votes for women." Even Mr. Asquith, as well as the audience, seemed to see the aptness of this reply, but its author was violently thrown out, as were the fourteen other men who defended the women's cause.

'Outside, a scheme had been planned which was to prove the most exciting incident of the evening. Two Suffragettes had climbed on the roof adjacent to Bingley Hall and were seen crouching behind a chimney stack about thirty feet from the ground. The police called for a fire escape. The position was serious, seeing that Mr. Asquith was due to leave the hall to address an overflow meeting. The women were shouting "Votes for Women". The officers made desperate efforts to reach

the roof but their every attack was met by a shower of slates which the women hacked from the roof. By this time the fire hose had been procured and a stream of ice-cold water was poured on the two shrinking women. "We will," said one, "come quietly if you will act like Englishmen and see that Mr. Asquith accepts our petition." Just as the police reached the roof Mr. Asquith drove past the women's fort and a brick, hurled from the roof, passed over the Premier's car. There were muffled cries as the police officers seized the two women on the very edge of the coping overlooking the street thirty feet below. Terrified women in the street shrieked and turned their heads away while the violent struggle went on upon the roof. A fire escape was quickly rushed to the wall. The women, continuing to struggle, asked that they might be allowed to descend alone. Eventually one officer stepped on the ladder and pulled one woman with him, a second officer holding her head.'

All this time other women had been trying to gain entrance to the meeting, the crowd supporting them in their repeated attempts. The barricades at last gave way and they made for the doors. The great force of police defending the hall resisted the women and the crowd who followed.

Under strong police guard, the Prime Minister got away from the hall and to the station without having vouchsafed a word on the question that had dominated the whole proceedings. Women were at the train to question him, but with police aid he escaped the hearing and the answering of their questions, and the train glided away, bearing Mr. Asquith to London and leaving behind the women who, as their final word, broke a window in the train's last retreating coach.

Our women were arrested for that night's work. They had risked their lives in asking political liberty for women.

Birmingham at least brought matters to a head. The Government were obliged to act. Mayors and Councils, police and business interests, Liberal leaders in the constituencies could not and would not tolerate the repetition of such scenes. Only two courses were open. They could give women the vote and thus put an instant end to militancy, or they could try to break the spirit of the militants by a harsher policy of coercion.

They chose the latter course.

Forcible feeding was started. The women arrested for their part in the Birmingham Protest were imprisoned in Winson Green Gaol and very soon the news reached us that instead of releasing them after a period of hunger-striking—as though that were not suffering enough—the Government gave orders that they were to be forcibly fed. Terrible scenes were enacted in the gaol, as the women, naturally, made resistance and they were seized and held by wardresses while doctors forced tubes down nose, or throat, and poured food into their struggling bodies. It was dreadful to think of; much more dreadful to endure. Questioned in Parliament on this violent turn in their policy, the Government described it as ‘medical treatment’, and ‘hospital treatment’. But here the Government met opposition from medical men. The eminent surgeon Mr. Mansell-Moullin, M.D., F.R.C.S., vice-president of the Royal College of Surgeons, wrote to *The Times*, out of his thirty years’ hospital experience, to protest against the Government’s expression ‘hospital treatment’, saying that ‘If it was used in the sense and meaning in which it appears in your columns it is a foul libel. Violence and brutality have no place in hospital treatment.’ Other medical men corroborated him: Dr. H. Roberts wrote to the *Manchester Guardian* to raise his protest against this latest form of official cruelty. One hundred and sixteen doctors signed a memorial to Mr. Asquith, in which, as medical practitioners, they most urgently protested against the treatment by forcible feeding of the Suffragist prisoners in Birmingham Gaol.

‘We submit to you,’ said the memorial, ‘that this method of feeding, when the patient resists, is attended by the gravest risks, that unforeseen accidents are liable to occur and that the subsequent health of the patient may be seriously injured. In our opinion this action is unwise and inhumane.’ The medical authorities who signed this protest included Sir Victor Horsley, C. Mansell-Moullin, W. Hugh Fenton, Forbes Winslow, Alexander Hay, E. Vipont Brown, D. Rhys Jones, and many others.

Dr. F. W. Forbes Ross wrote: ‘I will pledge my word that some very horrid and degrading scenes of gross brutality could hardly have been avoided unless the prisoners are seriously ill and too unconscious to resist.’

The *Manchester Guardian* editorially admitted that if the facts of what was happening to the prisoners were as stated, their treatment was to be ‘properly described as torture’.

Mr. H. W. Nevinson and Mr. H. N. Brailsford now resigned their positions as leader writers on the *Daily News*, a serious professional and financial sacrifice on their part. In making their resignations known by a letter to *The Times* they pointed out that the real offence of the Militant Women was to have 'embarrassed the Government, injured it at by-elections and exposed its chiefs to the ridicule of the country'. 'The Government had at the outset,' they said, 'treated the militant movement with a "blind contempt" and the "graver responsibility" of what might happen before the end of the agitation would fall upon the members of a nominally democratic party, who have turned their backs upon a gallant movement of emancipation.'

Mother and I hastened to Birmingham to stand by the women who had risked and were now suffering so much for the cause. We were asked by outsiders to repudiate their action. We would not. We held the Prime Minister primarily responsible, and ourselves secondarily responsible, for the acts done that night by the police and by our women. Mr. Asquith had barred to the Suffragette movement every conventional avenue of approach. In Birmingham our women had found a way, and though hindered and checked at every turn by political and police ingenuity and superior force and finance, they had incurred for themselves the agony and indignity of forcible feeding in gaol.

The Home Secretary, who defended in the House of Commons the Government's forcible feeding policy, was challenged at a public meeting: 'What about feeding women by force?' Our prisoners tried to make him, and the subordinates he instructed, legally accountable, but the law gave them no remedy. Indeed it was with difficulty that Mr. Marshall, the prisoners' solicitor, could gain admission to the prison to take their instructions. When he at last saw them, he brought back a heartrending account of what they were enduring. Their health was breaking down under this so-called 'medical treatment', and one, Laura Ainsworth, had soon to be released. I went to Birmingham to see her in the nursing home where she had to be taken and heard the dreadful story of her ordeal. She had left behind her, still suffering, Mary Leigh, Patricia Woodlock, Charlotte Marsh, Leslie Hall, Mabel Capper, Ellen Barwell, Mary Edward, and Hilda Burkitt.

Now occurred the historic protest of Newcastle which led to the arrest of Lady Constance Lytton.

Mr. Lloyd George was to speak at a Budget Meeting in Newcastle-on-Tyne. Not one of our women could get into the meeting, but as *The Times* expressed it, the women 'were represented by chivalrous and rash young men, whose action, foolhardy in its courage, few of us would be capable of emulating. It is hardly necessary to say that the dangers which they had deliberately faced quite came up to their expectations.'

Mr. Lloyd George began his speech by humorously remarking that he, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, had been doing five months' hard labour. 'What about the women!' shouted a voice. A violent struggle ensued and the questioner was ejected with violence. Mr. Lloyd George went on to speak of taxation. 'There is no tax on stomach pumps!' resounded through the hall, and the tumult was louder than ever and again there was a violent ejection. 'There has been a great slump in——' Mr. Lloyd George was saying. 'There has been a worse slump in Liberal prestige through the treatment of women,' came from one in the audience. 'Who was responsible,' Mr. Lloyd George wanted to know, 'for——' 'For the forcible feeding of women in prison,' a voice completed his sentence.

Outside the hall, extraordinary conditions prevailed. Stout barricades, mounted police, and immense crowds in the streets were the most obvious features of Mr. Lloyd George's visit to Newcastle. 'If Mr. Lloyd George had been the menaced Sovereign of a rebellious state,' said the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, 'he could not have had a stronger bodyguard'.

Unable to enter the meeting by ticket or by forcing the doors, our women used stones as messages of protest. Seeing Sir Walter Runciman's car slowly driving through the crowd, and thinking that Mr. Lloyd George would be in it, Lady Constance Lytton ran forward and threw a stone at the car, hitting the radiator. Her stone was labelled: 'To Lloyd George: Rebellion against tyrants is obedience to God.' 'Deeds, not words' appeared on other stones which were thrown at Post Office windows, as being Government property, and at the Liberal Club. Several women were arrested and from the Central Police Station they wrote this letter to the W.S.P.U. headquarters in London:

Friends, all is well. We are glad to follow where our companions have led the way. We are proud to offer to the great Cause and to our adored leader—God bless her—the utmost service and sacrifice in our power.

We shall carry on our protest in prison. We shall put before the Government by means of the hunger-strike these alternatives: To release us in a few days; to inflict violence on our bodies; to add death to the champions of our cause by leaving us to starve; or—the best and only wise alternative—to give women the vote. We appeal to the Government to yield, not to the violence of our protest, but to the reasonableness of our demand and to grant the vote to duly qualified women. We then would serve our full sentences obediently and without complaint, according to the pledge of our leader. Our thoughts are with the cause and with our leaders, our comrades and our homes. We ask the prayers of our Comrades and of our loved ones at home, that we may be guided to carry out our policy of 'No Surrender' in a way that will hold up the high traditions of our Union. Our protest is against the action of the Government in opposing Woman Suffrage and against that alone. We have no quarrel with those who may be ordered to maltreat us.

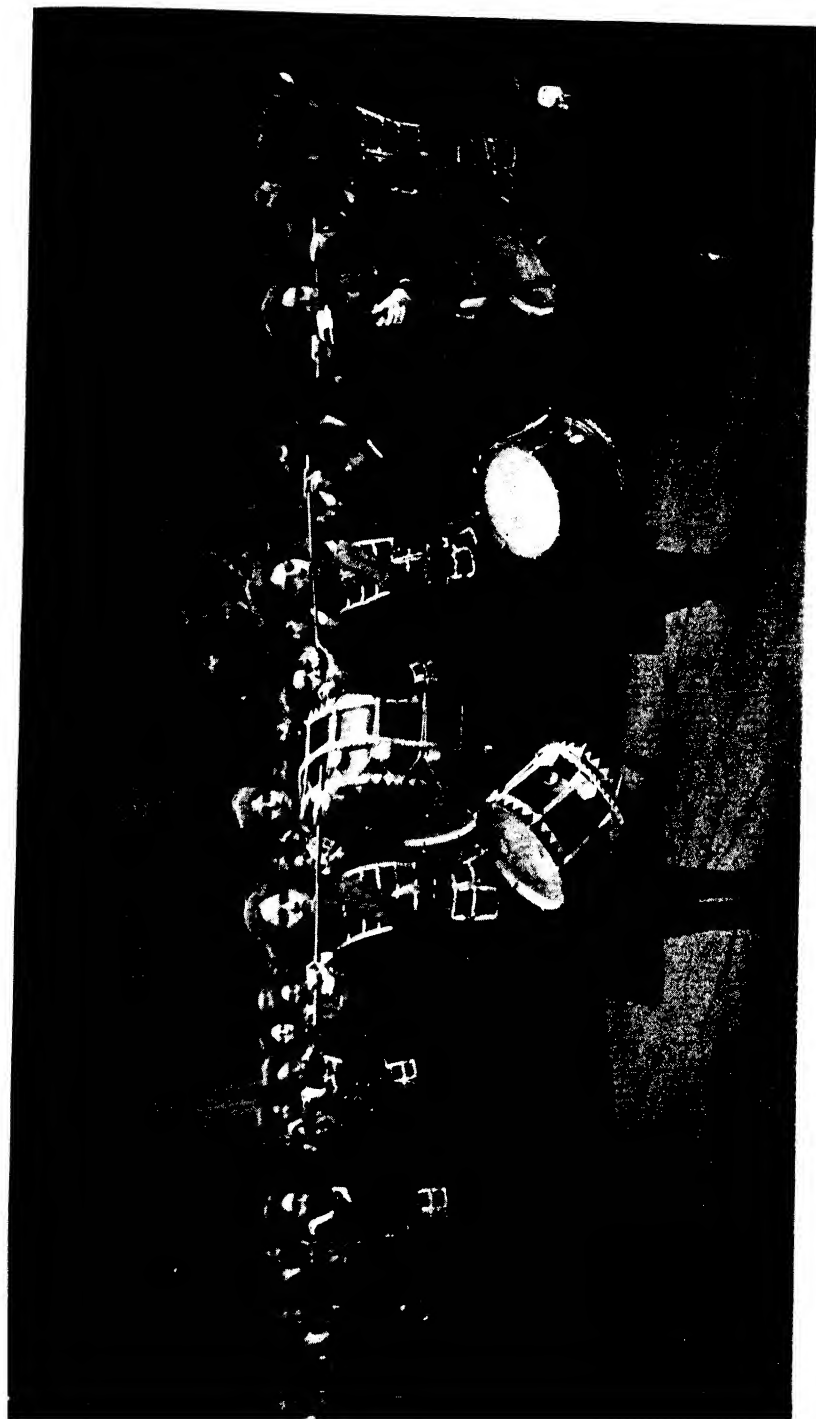
Lady Constance signed this letter with the others arrested: Mrs. Jane E. Brailsford, Kathleen Brown, Violet Bryant, Winifred Jones, Kitty Marion, Dorothy Pethick, Ellen Pitfield, Ellen W. Pitman, Dorothy Shallard. They were all sentenced to imprisonment, some for fourteen days and others for one month. Lady Constance Lytton was charged with assaulting Sir Walter Runciman and damaging his car with a stone. She said that her object was not injury, but protest. Mrs. H. N. Brailsford was charged with her attempt to demolish a barricade with an axe which she had carried in a muff till the moment of action. The prisoners one and all adopted the hunger-strike.

In two and a half days Lady Constance Lytton and Mrs. Brailsford were released without being forcibly fed. The reason for this clemency was too evident. It was respect of persons. They protested against this discrimination in their favour. They reported: 'Four of our friends were being forcibly fed before we left: their cries of protest and distress reached us in our cells.'

'The release from Newcastle Gaol of the two militant Suffragettes, Lady Constance Lytton and Mrs. Brailsford, because they took part in the hunger-strike in which all imprisoned Suffragettes had taken part, has created considerable surprise in many quarters,' said the *London Evening News*. 'Such treatment contrasts very strangely with that of the Suffragettes at Birmingham Gaol where the hunger-striker has been fed through a feeding-tube.'

Certainly there was very sufficient cause for not risking the forcible

feeding of Lady Constance Lytton, for on independent medical evidence she had a 'chronic valvular lesion' of the heart. Would that lesion have saved her if she had not been who she was? Lady Constance thought not and she determined to put this to the proof. Disguising herself as a working woman and assuming the name of 'Jane Warton', she went to Liverpool to throw another stone and see whether she could or would not be forcibly fed when her true identity was unknown. She chose Liverpool because there at that very time three Suffragettes, including a working woman, Selina Martin, were being forcibly fed. Telling headquarters nothing of her purpose, Lady Constance, disguised and quite unrecognized, stood on the edge of the crowd at a meeting which our organizer and local members were holding outside the gaol. Suddenly she lifted her voice: 'If there are no men in Liverpool who will stand up for the prisoners who are asking no more than the vote, let the women do their part! I call upon you all to follow me to the Governor's house.' She moved off and the crowd followed. The police followed, too, and seized 'Jane Warton', but not in time to prevent her dropping her stones—she could manage nothing more—over the hedge enclosing the Governor's garden. Two other Suffragettes, Mrs. Nugent and Miss Elsie Howey, determined that she should not go to prison alone. Thus 'Jane Warton' had two friends with her in the dock next morning and she utilized their presence to distract attention from herself. The prisoners' van carried all three to Walton Gaol. Arrived there, Lady Constance discovered in her pocket a handkerchief marked 'C. L.' and a reel of cotton marked 'Lytton', which she threw unnoticed in the fire in the reception-room. Her long hair had been cut, spectacles changed her looks, her clothing had been bought with a careful eye to effect; the matron and wardresses suspected nothing. Prison dress now replaced her 'Jane Warton' disguise. She announced her adoption of the hunger-strike. She was asked the usual medical questions which she refused to answer except to say that she was not suffering from any infectious disease. She was prepared, however, to submit to a medical examination of her heart, had it been suggested. It was not suggested. This had been precisely her policy when, as Lady Constance Lytton, she was imprisoned at Newcastle. Next day the senior medical officer appeared, but he asked her no questions and made no examination. All meals were brought to her cell but she ate nothing. Her bedding was removed from the cell during the day as she would not roll it up but lay on it in the day-time—a very



Drum and fife band with Mary Leigh



Annie Kenney



Christabel and her mother

wise proceeding on her part. On the fourth day of her imprisonment she was informed that forcible feeding would be employed; she replied that when the legislators ceased to resist enfranchising women, she would cease to resist taking food. A few hours later the medical officer arrived in her cell, with four or five wardresses and the feeding apparatus.

No examination was made of her pulse and heart. As Lady Constance Lytton, she had had a heart examination by two prison doctors and another who, as it seemed, had come from London, and as a result was not forcibly fed, but released. As 'Jane Warton', the working woman, she had no heart examination at all, and was forcibly fed. Four wardresses held her down, a fifth helped in the forcible feeding process. The doctor offered the choice of a steel or a wooden gag, explaining that the steel gag would hurt. The prisoner was silent. After an effort with the wooden gag, the steel gag was used. Her jaws were forced painfully wide, the large tube pushed far down her throat and food very quickly poured down but returned in a few seconds after, in a bout of sickness, while doctor and wardresses held down her retching body. Then they left her—no clean clothing could then be supplied, it seemed, and she lay as she was, until the next morning. From the next cell the distressing sounds of the forcible feeding of Elsie Howey could be heard.

The following day, Lady Constance was fed by force a second time. The suffering and the sickness were this time worse than before. The same evening doctors and wardresses came again to the cell. Again the horror and the vomiting and now while the vomiting continued, so did the inpouring of food. After this third feeding Lady Constance showed greater signs of illness than before and the doctor called in the assistant medical officer, who happened to be nearby, to test her heart. He rapidly did so and cheerfully pronounced it a 'splendid heart', but his senior seemed less confident. The fourth time, the doctor brought brandy and Bovril with his feeding contrivance, but afterward the sufferer felt a reaction of intense cold. Next morning, the same food as at first was used and again came the sickness. At last, one morning, the Governor and doctor arrived together at her cell door. It was to tell her that she was released on medical grounds. Her sister, Lady Emily Lyttons, had come to take her home. The Press Association had heard a rumour that she was a prisoner in Walton Gaol. The prison officials had informed the Prison Commissioners in London that their

mysterious prisoner was, they suspected, someone other than she professed to be.

Lady Constance Lytton had proved her point: that the Liberal Government had, as she pointed out in a letter to the Home Secretary, a different standard of treatment for working women and for other women. When she was Lady Constance Lytton, they found her to be suffering from serious valvular disease of the heart and unfit for forcible feeding. When she was 'Jane Warton', they did not even question the state of her heart and fed her by force.

Lady Constance had made a stand for real democracy. She had taken a desperate risk for votes for women.

Even if forcible feeding had been a medical operation, as the Home Secretary claimed, until at last he classed it as punishment or an aggravation of punishment, this operation without the consent of the prisoner 'patients' was illegal, so one prisoner, Emily Davison, insisted, when the prison doctor entered her cell. He ignored her protest and she was seized, held down by force despite her resistance, and the operation was performed. She barricaded herself in her cell to prevent a repetition of what she deemed an unlawful assault. As the door could not be forced open, a hosepipe was turned on her through the small window in the door and she was drenched with icy water. Finally the door was forced and Miss Davison, shuddering with cold, was placed in hot blankets—but soon after was again forcibly fed, then, after medical examination, was released. The visiting committee was held responsible for the use of the hosepipe. Later Miss Davison brought an action for this assault and though she did not secure adequate damages, she won the case.

Victory was emerging ever more clearly from the increasing struggle of that time. Nine years of suffering was still dividing women from their enfranchisement but from the moment that women had consented to prison, hunger-strikes, and forcible feeding as the price of the vote, the vote was really theirs.

The immense and growing responsibility of her whole movement; the hard work of campaigning at meetings, far beyond her real strength; the constant demand upon her attention, her vigilance, her amiability, her judgment, her inspiration; the imminence of imprisonment and hunger-strike—Mother had all this strain and burden

to bear, when she was smitten by a great grief. Harry fell ill with infantile paralysis. Once again, practical necessity sharpened grief and trial. Her son's future had already been an anxiety to her. Her past experience had made her fear any of the professions: she was seeking some opening in which political opinions would not conflict. He had been for a time on an experimental farm owned by a wealthy idealist concerned in the revival of agriculture on scientific lines and the return of the people to the land, a cause in which her son himself was interested. Now he would be an invalid, more than ever needing her care. She turned to her friend of many years, Mrs. Stanton Blatch, now living again in New York, and the outcome was her first tour in America. Mrs. Stanton Blatch writes in a letter to me:

It was in 1909 that your Mother wrote to me about the illness of Harry who had been a great favourite of mine. She spoke of her desire to earn some money so as to be able to secure for Harry the best of medical care and asked if I could put her in touch with some reliable lecture bureau.

Without a day's delay I brought her and my mother's former agents into communication and arranged also that the Women's Political Union of America, of which I was president, should give the great militant leader a suitable send-off in the popular auditorium of Carnegie Hall.

Nerved by necessity, Mother sailed to America, leaving her boy in a nursing home in charge of Aunt Mary and his sisters, and under the skilled and loving care of two Suffragette nurse friends, Miss Townend and Miss Pine.

Her American visit was short though crowded and strenuous. She soon came back again, hoping to find her child improving; she had heard in America of wonderful recoveries. He was no better. We had Christmas together. He had grown so like his father, in his support of the women's cause, in his way with his mother and sisters, and in his attitude towards all women.

In the New Year he left us.

Mother turned to her work again. Her son was gone. She would, all the more, use her life and, if need be, give it to serve the women who were looking to her for leadership and depending on her for victory.

1910—The Year of Truce

A Government Pledge—The Conciliation Committee—The Conciliation Bill—Procession and Meeting—The Government's Answer—Hope for the Autumn Session—Black Friday—The Battle of Downing Street—Another Pledge—Sorrow Comes Again

A YEAR of Truce was 1910. The Truce was declared by Mrs. Pankhurst after the General Election early in the year, because she wanted the Government to decide, in an atmosphere of peace and calm, what would be their action in regard to votes for women in the new Parliament.

The General Election had made the Liberal and Conservative parties equal in strength. The Government had no longer any majority of their own. The remainder of the House of Commons consisted of Irish Nationalists and forty Labour members.

The disappearance of the Government's majority was largely, if not mainly, due to the woman suffrage issue. Liberal women had lost their enthusiasm for a Government who would not give them the vote. The earnest and energetic campaign of Mrs. Pankhurst and her followers had stirred the electors to vote against the Government.

The veto of the House of Lords was the issue brought before the electors by the Government in 1910.

The following statement in the London Press, by an elector whose identity we did not know, was expressive of the feeling aroused.

'If the Tariff Reformers are right, the Budget will diminish my income. In either case, I am only touched in my pocket. But if I help to keep in office a Government whose conduct to women I consider disgraceful, I share the disgrace. I have no love for tariff reform as it is likely to be administered. I have no love for the House of Lords as it is composed at present, but I can face five years of tariff reform and five years more of the House of Lords with equanimity. What I cannot face

with equanimity is the idea of Mrs. Pankhurst being forcibly fed, and I believe that no man who has seen her and heard her speak and realizes the fearful indignity which forcible feeding would involve to such a woman, can be prepared to acquiesce in such an outrage.'

'They are committing an act of violence against the constitution,' said Mr. Winston Churchill of the House of Lords. 'They are trampling upon the whole constitutional principle. They are using their power in a furious, sordid spirit to smash and wreck the British Constitution.'

The Suffragettes borrowed the words to describe the Cabinet's own opposition to women's constitutional right of voting and to their way of dealing with women who were insisting upon this right.

The Government did not ignore woman suffrage at the General Election of 1910 as had all Governments in the past. They gave the semblance of an election pledge on this issue. For the first time in history a political party went to the country with the admission that the votes for women question was a living political issue. Mr. Balfour's saying in 1906: 'The truth is that Woman Suffrage is not in the swim' was no longer true. Militancy had floated the Cause. All that remained was to get it into port.

The Government's 'pledge' on woman suffrage, as uttered by the Prime Minister, was this: 'Nearly two years ago I declared on behalf of the present Government that in the event of our bringing in a Reform Bill we should make the question of Suffrage for Women an open question for the House of Commons to decide. My declaration survives the General Election, and this cause, so far as the Government is concerned, shall be no worse off in the new Parliament than it would have been in the old.'

It could not be worse off than it was in the old Parliament! The Prime Minister's declaration did not disarm our opposition. Furthermore, we claimed that the Government ought to take full responsibility for women's enfranchisement.

'Why don't you fight the Tories?' irate Liberals asked us. 'Because the present Government is a Liberal one and we hold the Government in power responsible for granting or denying us the vote,' was our answer. 'If this Election brings a Conservative Government into office, we shall oppose them, unless they give women the vote.' This was perfectly well known. A Conservative M.P., Mr. (now Sir) George Touche, stated the case to a nicety. He acknowledged the 'vivifying influence' on the woman suffrage cause exerted by the Women's Social

and Political Union which had, he said, 'filled Holloway with the new, historical order of the Suffragettes'. Many supporters of the Liberal Government, he went on to say, were persuaded that the Government had made a serious blunder in trying to crush the Suffragette agitation by brute force and that, in so doing, the Government were out of touch with the sentiments of the people. But what of the Government's successors, what of the next Conservative Government? asked this Conservative M.P. 'The Conservative Party need be under no illusion. The Women's Social and Political Union have been perfectly frank on the subject. If the Conservative Government fail, as the Liberal Government have failed, the agitation at present directed against the latter will be directed against them.'

The truce to militancy was from first to last loyally observed by Suffragettes. Non-militant work only was undertaken and this was to culminate in a magnificent procession and demonstration in London, attended by representatives of our whole organization.

Ideal conditions existed for enfranchising women. Time was available because a vacuum occurred in the Parliamentary programme. Said Mr. Balfour: 'I do not believe there has ever been a Parliamentary situation at all parallel with the present one. We have had no King's Speech in the sense of a speech announcing a policy of legislation. The House of Commons has been engaged in initiating no legislation.' Mrs. Pankhurst asked the Government to fill the gap by a short and simple Women's Enfranchisement Bill. Her claim was not conceded, but she maintained the Truce, in the hope that the resumption of militancy might be averted.

Now came a vindication of militancy by a member of the Government, Sir Rufus Isaacs (later Lord Reading), then Solicitor-General. Referring to the Liberal campaign against the House of Lords' veto, he said: 'The days are past for rioting and we do not need to have recourse to bloodshed or violence to carry on our schemes of progress and reform, because we have a fairly good franchise which is an assurance that the will of the people must prevail in these democratic days.'

What an admission! It meant, first, that the militancy of voteless women was justified—though we, unlike voteless men, would have nothing to do with bloodshed, and were genuinely reluctant to the use of violence. The Solicitor-General's words were also an admission that women, being voteless, were deprived of peaceful and constitutional means of getting justice from Parliament. The *Westminster Gazette*

rubbed in the argument by saying that formerly, when the great mass of the people were voteless, they had to do something violent in order to show what they felt. Today the elector's 'bullet is his ballot'. Borrowing these words we felt entitled to say: 'Today women are voteless; they have to do something violent to show what they feel. Tomorrow the woman elector's ballot will be her bullet.'

The Parliament Bill to restrict the powers of the House of Lords was under hot discussion, and the *Daily News* wrote of 'armed revolt' as the only alternative to political slavery. But despite these Liberal encouragements to militancy, we Suffragettes adhered firmly to the Truce, and prepared for a great peaceful demonstration.

With the death of King Edward VII we, with all the country, were in mourning and in sympathy with Queen Alexandra. So in a serious atmosphere of national peace the Conciliation Committee for Woman Suffrage came into being, and a new chapter of Suffrage history opened. Eight hard years were to pass before victory, but the Conciliation Committee in 1910 prepared the shape of the settlement of 1918, while militancy, actual and potential, provided the necessary driving force.

Lord Lytton, chairman of the Conciliation Committee, was the brother of the Suffragette prisoner who, as 'Jane Warton', had endured the worst suffering such a prisoner could endure, and the honorary secretary, Mr. H. N. Brailsford, was the husband of one who had been imprisoned and had risked the same suffering. They knew, therefore, the spirit and motive of the militant women and their readiness to sacrifice all that life held for them, and even life itself, rather than waver in their fight.

Excepting the chairman and honorary secretary, the Conciliation Committee consisted entirely of Members of the House of Commons. All political parties were represented on the Committee which was able to state that its formation was 'welcomed by several Members of the Liberal and Conservative front benches and by the chairman of the Labour Party'. This object was to press for an early solution to the woman suffrage question, on a plan which members of all political parties might accept as a practicable minimum.

The normal course would have been for the Government to introduce a Woman Suffrage Bill, and prescribe its general terms, but as the existing Government had declined to do this, the initiative must, said

the Conciliation Committee, be taken by private Members of Parliament. To justify this policy, they pointed to the four hundred Members of the House of Commons pledged to woman suffrage, and to the small minority of seventy who had declared themselves hostile. Their Conciliation Bill was put forth as a 'working compromise which should first meet the objections of Liberals and Labour Members to any increase of the ownership and plural vote, and secondly, satisfy Conservative opinion as a cautious and moderate advance, and thirdly, be capable of statement in a single formula which could be debated without an undue expenditure of Parliamentary time'.

The simple merit of the Conciliation Bill was, as the Committee justly claimed, that in a way which no political party could consider objectionable or unfair, it would break down the barrier which then excluded all women from citizen rights. It was against that 'insulting exclusion', said the Committee, that women were fighting and to those who 'cared most about the Suffrage' it was a secondary matter how many women would be qualified under the Bill. The Conciliation Bill proposed a compromise which satisfied a Committee including both supporters and opponents of Adult Suffrage.

'This question is as urgent as it is important,' the Committee said. 'It is forty years since the first Suffrage Bill passed its second reading in the House of Commons. The patience and ability of the women of the older Suffrage societies deserved an earlier reward. The failure of Parliaments to give effect to an opinion which they have repeatedly avowed, would, if continued, justify women in complaining that in regard to them the Constitution had broken down. The painful struggle of the past four years is an experience which no one would wish to see repeated. However opinions may differ as to the methods by which this cause has recently been advocated, every one must deplore the fact that many women, whose high character gives them a commanding influence with their fellows, should be found in open hostility to the law of the land and that their capacity for devotion and self-sacrifice should be called forth in opposition to public order. Such a situation is directly contrary to the best interests of the State. It is with the object of preventing the continuance of this evil and of forwarding an act of justice long overdue that we ask support for this Bill. The reform will be the more gracious if it comes by the united effort of men of all parties.'

We welcomed the formation of the Conciliation Committee and

the Bill it proposed, without of course exonerating the Prime Minister and the Government from final responsibility, and we supported the movement with all our strength.

Mrs. Pankhurst said: 'It appears that Members of Parliament, as a whole, are prepared to vote the Conciliation Bill into law. The successful passage of the Bill seems therefore to be ensured, provided that the Prime Minister is willing that this shall be. It is difficult to believe that he will prevent the passage of the Bill and by so doing frustrate the present responsible effort towards peace.'

We increased our already vast non-militant propaganda in London and throughout the country and maintained the Truce which we had begun of our own accord.

We militants had, in fact, done our share of conciliation, before the Conciliation Committee was formed. It now only remained for the Government to do their share by seeing to it that women got the vote. If the Government refused to do this and so destroyed the conciliation movement, we should have more public sympathy than ever on our necessary resumption of militancy.

My own strongest, but unspoken, reason for welcoming the Conciliation movement was that it might avert the need for stronger militancy and would at least postpone the use thereof. Mild militancy was more or less played out. The Government had, as far as they could, closed every door to it, especially by excluding Suffragette questioners from their meetings. Cabinet Ministers had shown their contempt for the mildness of our protests and had publicly taunted us on that score. And neutral onlookers had warned us that these milder acts would, by their 'monotony', grow futile, because they would cease to impress anybody, and therefore would cease to embarrass the Government. As W.S.P.U. strategist, I saw this as plainly as any outside critic or counsellor. Strategically, then, a pause in militancy would be valuable, for it would give time for familiarity to fade, so that the same methods could be used again with freshness and effect. Much depended, in militancy, as it depends in other things, upon timing and placing, upon the dramatic arrangement and sequence of acts and events. A particular kind of protest, made after the Government had wrecked the Conciliation Bill—if the Government should indeed decide to wreck it—would in its effect be different from the same kind of protest made before the Conciliation movement began.

Another reason why mild militancy could not avail much longer

was that our women were beginning to revolt against the one-sided violence which they experienced in the course of their attempts to petition the King's Prime Minister. It was being said among them that they would prefer to break a window than be themselves thrown about and hurt. They were arguing that the W.S.P.U. respect for human safety ought to apply to themselves as well as to everyone else. They were questioning whether, for the sake of others dear to them, or even for their own sake, they had any right to risk personal injury, if a little damage to panes of glass would have the same, and indeed more, effect. For they were not ignorant of the fact that the law itself, as enforced in the law courts, was often more indulgent to those who attacked persons than to those who attacked property.

The forcible feeding of Lady Constance Lytton and others had driven our women to the conclusion that there was, to say the least of it, a singular indifference to the suffering and indignity endured by women for the sake of political enfranchisement.

The Parliamentary field was clear for the Conciliation Bill. Time was available and a large majority of the Members of the House were prepared to vote for it.

The opportunity had arrived, we urged, for reforming the Constitution by 'yielding to women their political birthright', and it was 'inconceivable' that at that moment of crisis in their conflict with the House of Lords the Government could shut the door of citizenship in the women's faces. What right had a Liberal Government to condemn the House of Lords as a hindrance to liberty, if they themselves denied liberty to half the people by depriving women of the possibility of voting on any terms?

Giving the Government the benefit of our doubt, we worked in non-militant fashion, in support of the Bill. Mother stirred the country by her appeals. The Liberal newspapers made encouraging forecasts, especially the *Manchester Guardian*, which declared that there was more than a hope that 'we are on the eve of the accomplishment of a deeply desired and long-delayed reform'.

The general public, the House of Commons, a large section of the Press, notably the Liberal Press, were supporting the Conciliation Bill. 'Politicians who, six months ago, despaired of any solution during the present session of Parliament now admit that the omens are favourable,' wrote Lord Lytton.

'It would,' said a well-known Liberal M.P., Mr. Aneurin Williams, 'be lamentable if, having before us a practical solution upon which almost all are agreed, we should let slip the apt moment of putting it into effect and be confronted with a recrudescence of turmoil and lawlessness.'

The Conciliation Bill was brought in by Mr. (later Sir) David Shackleton, a Labour M.P. 'We are living,' he said, 'in a time of truce on the Constitutional [House of Lords] question and surely this House might well be occupied in giving a few hours' consideration to this Bill.'

So evident was the support for the Bill in the House of Commons that Mr. F. E. Smith (afterwards Lord Birkenhead), though he spoke against it, decided that to challenge a division would be futile. Thus it passed through this first stage by acclamation.

The Government did not at once grant or refuse time for its further progress. Indeed lack of time they could not plead, because the House of Commons was positively idle for want of Bills and on some occasions rose in the afternoon instead of in the evening. Three to six days, at the most, were all that were required, with ordinary fair play, to pass the Bill through its remaining stages.

Mr. Asquith himself admitted that a majority of his Cabinet were committed to woman suffrage. Pro-Government newspapers editorially supported the claim for facilities.

The Liberal women in conference demanded that the Government should grant time for the Bill and it was even proposed that they should march to the House of Commons to show their strong determination. Finally, it was decided to request the Prime Minister to receive a deputation. This he consented to do, agreeing also to see a deputation of the non-militants, the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.

'The first and greatest political demonstration of the new King's reign', so Mrs. Pankhurst called it. The women's procession in support of the Conciliation Bill was 'representative in the widest sense'. Those who marched in it belonged to all classes of society, all professions, all trades, and all occupations then open to women, and it represented both the militant and non-militant sections. The tie which bound us together on that day was our intense desire for the Parliamentary vote.

Mrs. Pankhurst herself led the prisoners' group in the procession, hundreds of women who had been wrongfully imprisoned for the sake

of freedom, many of whom had passed through the hunger-strike, and no fewer than eighty-seven of whom had endured forcible feeding. Those who were kept out of the ranks by illness marched by proxy. 'While I recognize to the full the value of the work done by all,' said Mrs. Pankhurst, 'I believe that the sacrifice of personal liberty that others may be free, always has been and always will be the most powerful appeal to the sympathy and imagination of the great mass of human beings.'

Once more the newspapers expressed all praise of this women's demonstration. 'It is certainly no exaggeration to say,' said *The Times*, 'that never has a political demonstration of such curious human interest been seen in London.' 'A feature of the demonstration which compelled notice,' reported another paper, 'was the general friendliness of the crowd towards the women and their cause, and the spectator could not but marvel at the immense change that had taken place in the public attitude towards them since a few short years ago.' 'I went to scoff and came away an ardent sympathizer with these brave, clever women who are fighting so pluckily for what they are convinced is their right,' said one correspondent. 'The proud march past of hundreds of women who have cheerfully gone to gaol and whose imprisonment has become a title of honour is a profoundly significant fact.' 'Never since the great franchise demonstration when labourers from every part of the United Kingdom and Ireland marched from the Embankment to Hyde Park, has such a political gathering been seen.'

The procession culminated in our great Albert Hall Meeting (the non-militants having gathered there on a previous day), and of this the Press recorded that 'only the subtle, delicate touch of women could have produced such a scene as that witnessed in the Albert Hall after the procession. Viewed artistically it was a triumph of skill and financially the meeting was a great enterprise.'

Victory! Mrs. Pankhurst began her speech as chairman with that word. Behind her, beside her, before her were massed thousands of women. Victory was in the air, the movement had reached high tide. Women were roused, the people were with us, true and loyal friends had brought forward a practicable measure which the House of Commons had accepted by acclamation and was ready to carry through the remaining stages.

One word from the Government and the Bill would pass. Opposition from the House of Lords we did not fear. Either they would

simply pass the measure or, if not, we did not doubt our power to overcome their opposition. To have brought the Bill through the House of Commons would be the essence of our victory.

Lord Lytton was there to tell us of the prospects of the Bill. 'It now remains with the Government,' said he, 'to help its passage into law. We have every reason to be confident.'

'Could anyone imagine that the spirit in that meeting was going to be crushed?' asked Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence. She as treasurer rejoiced in the generous giving of £5,000 for the W.S.P.U. campaign fund, money that symbolized the service, time, strength, and even life that women were prepared to give for this cause.

Annie Kenney spoke of the ideals and purpose of the women's movement. Claiming that we had the women with us, the electors with us, and the House of Commons with us, I said that we were confident the Prime Minister would grant the time needed to pass the Conciliation Bill, but that if he refused we should not take his answer as final. Appealing to Members of Parliament I said: 'We shall look to you in the House of Commons to fight for this cause there, as we shall fight for it outside.'

This great meeting and Mother's part in it were thus recorded by Mr. Henry Nevinson: 'No word can express the sense of determination, of confident triumph and unity in noble purpose that breathed from that vast assembly. I do not know which was the more impressive—the shout of devotion which greeted each leader as she came forward or the dead silence of the thousands listening to every word. . . . Yet there was one moment that abides in my mind as supreme. It was the moment when a slight and elegant figure in black, endowed with all the influence of a noble career and an unflinching personality, rose from the chair, and after the wild storm of applause had subsided, uttered in that calm but penetrating voice the simple sentence: "We have only one word in our thoughts today, that word is Victory."'

The Prime Minister received the deputations of non-militant Suffragists and of Liberal women, as arranged, but deferred his statement as to facilities for the Conciliation Bill until he should make it in the House of Commons. Mrs. Fawcett, who led the non-militant deputation, represented to him that there would be great disappointment and, she feared, a great outburst of anger if the Conciliation Bill were not

allowed to go beyond a mere second reading: 'for we have had Bills read a second time ever since 1870'. She begged Mr. Asquith to give the House of Commons the opportunity to pass the Bill. Lady McLaren (afterwards Lady Aberconway), on behalf of the Women's Liberal Federation, said that if the Government refused the request for facilities, the Liberal women would have to go to the country and say that the Government who were against the veto of the House of Lords were placing a veto on the House of Commons by refusing to allow the passage of the Conciliation Bill.

An Anti-Suffragist group was also received that day by Mr. Asquith. He told them that he shared their opinion, but was on that point in a minority in his Cabinet, and that it was the Cabinet that would have to decide what should be done in regard to the Conciliation Bill.

This statement was highly important because it placed the full responsibility for the fate of the Bill on the shoulders of Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Lloyd George, and the other Ministers who formed the pro-suffrage majority in the Cabinet. If the Conciliation Bill were unable to pass, these pro-suffrage 'friends' in the Cabinet would, on Mr. Asquith's showing, be chiefly to blame.

Mr. Asquith was committed to give the Bill a free course by these further words: 'I adhere entirely to a remark of mine that whatever my personal opinion about the merits or de-merits of the question, the new House of Commons ought to have the opportunity of expressing an opinion on it.' This, if words mean to politicians what they mean to ordinary persons, meant that the desired facilities would be given. 'We assume that the Prime Minister's reply will be favourable', was the Suffragettes' comment at this juncture. We further said: 'This pledge having been given by the Prime Minister, the natural consequence is that the House of Commons shall have the opportunity to pass the Conciliation Bill through all its stages. It has been suggested that the House might be allowed to carry the Bill as far as its second reading, but no further. But this would amount to a violation of the Prime Minister's pledge.'

The Government's answer came. It fulfilled our worst fears. Not that 'fear' is the right word to use of any Suffragette emotion! We were always confident of ultimate victory. We were never baffled except to fight better.

The Government, said Mr. Asquith, would grant facilities for the second reading of the Conciliation Bill, but would grant no facilities

for carrying the Bill beyond that stage. When Mr. Philip (later Viscount) Snowden asked: 'Will it be on an early day?' Mr. Asquith replied in the negative.

The Conciliation Committee refused to accept defeat. A memorial was sent to the Prime Minister signed by nearly two hundred M.P.s, requesting an early date for the second reading and full facilities for the subsequent stages of the Bill. Lord Lytton wrote to the Prime Minister urging that one week of Parliamentary time could be made sufficient. He said: 'The omission of Governments in the past to allow effect to be given to the opinion in favour of Woman Suffrage which the House of Commons has always expressed, has created among the best and most public-spirited women of the country a growing sense of grievance and a not unreasonable impatience of which the Government cannot fail to be aware.' Lord Lytton concluded by expressing 'the firm conviction that this question is ripe for settlement and that the present Session presents a unique opportunity'.

Mrs. Pankhurst said that she believed that there was a greater political understanding between men and women than ever before, and she had also greater faith in our friends in the House of Commons. If, however, it should prove necessary for women again to fight for their own right, the W.S.P.U. was ready.

Support for the Conciliation Bill was growing in the country, as well as in Parliament. Eminent men in all walks of life were memorializing the Government in its favour.

The Government, after a week of vigorous agitation, made a concession to public opinion by fixing a very early date for the second reading debate, allotting two days for the purpose. The second reading was carried in a free vote of the House by 299 to 190 votes. This majority of 109 was larger than the majority recorded for the much-discussed Budget, or for the veto resolutions relating to the House of Lords.

The Government intervened to bring about the reference of the Conciliation Bill to a committee of the whole House instead of to a Grand Committee, which would have been a more advantageous procedure. This damaged the prospects, but Lord Haldane, a professing friend in the Cabinet, declared that keeping the Bill in Committee of the whole House '*does not mean necessarily that the question shall be delayed in becoming law*'. His words meant, on the face of it, that he and the rest of the professing friends in the Cabinet would see that it became law.

The House of Commons had voted on the Bill, as the *Manchester Guardian* pointed out, not as an abstract question, but in all seriousness and with practical consequences in view, and 'it is for the Government to help it through the next stage or to see to it that some other definite solution is found and found quickly'.

Lord Lytton and his Committee were determined to secure the passage of the Bill that year and called upon the Government to provide the necessary time.

We were preparing another huge peaceful demonstration. Two processions to Hyde Park, and one hundred and fifty speakers—such was the programme, and it was carried through in triumph. This second enormous demonstration was organized and held only five weeks after the preceding one which had moved all onlookers, including the Press, to enthusiasm and sympathy. 'The very quietness of the crowd in Hyde Park was impressive. It takes something important to keep half a million people quiet,' said a newspaper report. 'Half a million is of course a descriptive phrase. None could even begin to enumerate the extent of the crowd.' That vast concourse of men and women were so many friends and allies. A sea of hands went up for the resolution put at forty platforms—a resolution, described by the Press, as 'a dialectical hit, both legitimate and effective'—'This Meeting rejoices that the Woman Suffrage Bill has passed its second reading by 109 votes, a majority larger than that accorded to the Government's House of Lords Veto proposal. The Meeting further calls upon the Government to bow to the will of the people as expressed by their representatives in the House of Commons and to provide the facilities necessary to enable the Bill to pass into law during the present Session of Parliament.'

The Commons had spoken. The people had spoken. Nothing imaginable remained to be done to demonstrate public support—or *we should have done it!* Every peaceful mode of promoting the Bill had been put into effect. Militancy was the only thing left, but to militancy we were determined not to resort, so long as there was life and hope left for the Bill.

The move was now with the Government. We waited!

In the meantime, Mr. Lloyd George had called together Liberal M.P.s and urged them to throw over the Conciliation Bill, arguing, it was reported, that to press for facilities would weaken the Cabinet in their contest with the House of Lords which, he held, ought with Welsh

Disestablishment to take precedence of votes for women. He favoured, said he, the Adult Suffrage measure introduced in a previous Session by Mr. Geoffrey Howard which, it should be noticed, he had not then effectively supported! A Liberal M.P. pointed out that if Mr. Lloyd George's plan were accepted it would be said that the Conciliation Bill had been killed by the Liberal Party.

Then came the Prime Minister's reply on behalf of the Government. He refused to give time for the passage of the Conciliation Bill.

This reply was not made in the House of Commons, but in a negative intimation conveyed direct to the Conciliation Committee.

The Conciliation Committee again declined to accept as final Mr. Asquith's refusal of facilities. Mrs. Pankhurst decided still to maintain the Truce and to continue the peaceful work for facilities, though she now deemed it wise to say that our patience had its limit.

'If they fail to get rid of the Government's veto upon the Conciliation Bill, women themselves must act,' she said. 'The opposition which the Women's Social and Political Union have offered to the Liberal Government during the past few years will be renewed and redoubled.'

Mr. Asquith in a letter to Lord Lytton, and Mr. Lloyd George in a subsequent statement in the House, excused the refusal to allow time for the Bill on the plea that its title precluded the widening of the Bill by amendment. But, as the *Manchester Guardian* said: 'the Government had given no evidence that if the Bill had not been thus restricted they would have treated it any better'.

On the adjournment of the House for the summer recess, Mr. Philip Snowden raised the matter again. The thirty Labour Members and 160 Liberals who voted for the Conciliation Bill were as good democrats as Mr. Asquith, Mr. Snowden maintained. When Mr. Asquith sought to defend himself, Lord Hugh Cecil intervened to say that the Government were attempting to kill the Conciliation Bill which, said he, would pass into law but for their refusal of time. He believed that whatever the scope and shape of the Bill, the Government would have hindered its passage.

The Autumn Session now offered us the next hope. No holiday for the W.S.P.U. that year! Mother left for meetings in Scotland. Suffragettes who were at the seaside and in the country turned their holidays into campaigns.

Mr. Lloyd George found the Liberal women in Wales wanting to know why he had voted against the Conciliation Bill. He explained why he thought the terms on which women now voted in Municipal elections were inadmissible when it came to voting in Parliamentary elections.

Mr. Brailsford, honorary secretary of the Conciliation Committee, said in a letter to *The Times* that Mr. Lloyd George had opposed the Conciliation Bill even 'before it was drafted'.

'What would have happened supposing we had given facilities to the Bill,' said Mr. Lloyd George, 'and supposing it then had gone through, with the Prime Minister speaking against it, with a dozen members of the Liberal Ministry voting against it? It would have gone to the House of Lords. If the Lords had thrown it out, we should have had to fight them upon the rejection of the Women's Conciliation Bill. The Liberal Party would have been in the position of having to fight the House of Lords on a question as to which half of the Liberal leaders thought the House of Lords were, on the whole, right. It is madness. We cannot allow our British Parliament to be dictated to by persons outside the constituencies.'

The voteless women of the country were presumably the 'persons outside the constituencies' who were 'not to dictate to Parliament'. They would not have been outside the constituencies under the Conciliation Bill!

Mrs. Pankhurst declared that if in the Autumn Session the Parliamentary friends of the Conciliation Bill induced the Government to grant the needful time, well and good—but if they failed, then women must take the matter into their own hands, and would 'march to Westminster to demand that their charter of liberty be signed'.

Another General Election was rumoured, and appeals were already being made to us not to oppose Government candidates. That, we were advised, would be 'to give rein to a bitter and vindictive spirit'. Not at all, was our reply, we should make a calm but very decided attempt to remove an obstacle from the path of justice to women. But then, we were further advised, 'a Conservative Government might be returned to power, and you would be still worse off'. Impossible, we replied: No votes from a Conservative Government would be neither worse nor better than no votes from a Liberal Government. To exchange Mr. Asquith for Mr. Balfour would be no loss, even if it were no gain.

Before Parliament rose Mr. Asquith was asked by the Conciliation

Committee to receive a deputation which would submit their claim for facilities for the Bill. He declined to receive a deputation and suggested that a written statement be sent to him. Lord Lytton therefore expressed in writing the unanimous demand of his Committee for facilities to be afforded when the House resumed its Session in the autumn. Mr. Asquith refused this request and said that his pledge to allow the House of Commons an opportunity of dealing with the question did not apply to that Session. This was a deliberate breach of his pledge for that Parliament because, as all the world knew, the House of Commons would not live to see another Session and the New Year would see a new Parliament.

Some of our women were getting restive under the Truce but we were determined that not until the Government had given the final blow to the Conciliation Bill, and extinguished every hope of letting it pass in the autumn, would we consider a reversion to militancy. We knew that if the resumption of militancy became necessary, greater sympathy and support would be given us if we bided our time. We felt, too, that it was due to the Conciliation Committee to give them the fullest opportunity to exert their efforts to gain autumn facilities for the Bill before taking the political law into our own hands. Most of all, we profoundly desired to avoid the resumption of militancy, if it were politically and honourably possible, and we were determined to delay it as long as we could.

The autumn prospect was darkened when Lord Haldane, although a professed friend of woman suffrage for the past quarter of a century, began to oppose the passage of the Conciliation Bill. His sudden *volte-face* was a bad sign, indeed!

Cabinet Ministers who claimed to be Suffragists were sadly unhelpful! The Prime Minister was now so much entangled in his own pledges that had the pro-suffrage members of his Cabinet stood firm, the Bill must have gone through. But they did not. Some of them even attacked the Bill as 'undemocratic' though it was accepted as democratic enough by the Labour M.P., Mr. Shackleton, who introduced it, and by the others who voted for it, including Mr. J. R. Clynes, Mr. Arthur Henderson, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, and Mr. Snowden.

The Conciliation Committee now *offered so to alter the title of their Bill as to make its amendment in order—provided that time for the discussion of the Bill were given!*

Would the Government give the facilities in the autumn?

Sir Edward Grey gave the Government's answer to this in a reply to a deputation of women in his own constituency. He acknowledged the democratic nature of the Bill and approved its terms. He also admitted that he could quite understand the 'growing exasperation' felt when the House of Commons passed Woman Suffrage Bills on second reading by large majorities and made no further progress with them. Yet when questioned as to the autumn facilities, he definitely refused them and would give no promise for the next or any other year.

'Veto—utter blank sullen Veto!'—this telling phrase, coined by Mr. Winston Churchill for the Lords' veto, applied exactly to the Government's veto on the Conciliation Bill.

Sir Edward Grey's announcement really ended the Truce, yet we still clung to peaceful methods. Our next appeal for facilities was made at an Albert Hall meeting in November which was, if that could be, more determined, enthusiastic, electrical, than any of our former rallies. Money spoke! A sum of £9,000 was raised within a few minutes, representing who will ever know what self-denial, expressing the devotion of our women to a great cause, and their resolve to leave an inheritance of liberty to others.

This was our last non-militant effort. 'If the Conciliation Bill is killed,' said Mother, 'there will be an end to our truce.'

Now was Mr. Asquith's turn to speak and he did so by informing Parliament, when it met for the autumn's work, that it had but ten days more to live and would be dissolved on 28th November. No mention did he make of votes for women.

So ended the Government's unfulfilled pledge to women!

This sudden dissolution was generally recognized as the Government's mode of escape from a dilemma. 'Abandonment of the business of the Session,' said *The Times*, 'has some serious advantages for a Government confronted with many awkward questions such as . . . Woman Suffrage.'

While Mr. Asquith was announcing to the House of Commons its early end, Mrs. Pankhurst was addressing the Women's Social and Political Union in the Caxton Hall.

The three hundred women whom she led from there in deputation to the doors of Parliament included Mrs. Garrett Anderson, M.D., pioneer medical woman, twice mayor of Aldeburgh, who with her sister,

the non-militant leader, Mrs. Fawcett, had been so long identified with the suffrage cause; Mrs. Hertha Ayrton, the distinguished scientist, friend of Madame Curie; Miss Charlotte Haig, a kinswoman of Sir Douglas Haig; Mrs. Cobden Sanderson, daughter of Richard Cobden; Miss Neligan, a pioneer in women's education, whose seventy-eight years did not keep her from braving the dangers of the occasion; Miss Georgina Brackenbury, the younger Dr. Garrett Anderson, and Mrs. Saul Solomon, widow of the South African statesman.

Again the public had gathered in vast numbers to manifest their support of the women. 'For five hours Parliament Square was in a state of siege and only the rising of the House brought it to a close,' said the *Daily Chronicle*. 'During the whole of this time the women were in continual conflict with the police.'

Black Friday was the name by which that day was remembered, because of what the women suffered. As they advanced, they were not arrested but forcibly resisted. Pictures in the newspapers gave evidence of what the women endured and one in particular of Miss Ada Cécile Wright, knocked to the ground.

One of the oldest members of the deputation subsequently wrote to the Home Secretary that she had witnessed and endured insult and assault, although, said she, 'we know of no law to prevent us from going in groups of twelve as we did to the House of Commons, whether the Government of the day choose to receive us or not. Our cause was not only a just but a reasonable one. We proceeded in the most orderly manner, hoping that a few of our representatives, headed by our leader Mrs. Pankhurst, would be graciously received, more especially since the Conciliation Bill had passed its second reading by a majority greater than that accorded to the Budget or against the Lords' veto. But how were we met? By the engine of physical force—the Metropolitan Police—an instrument under the control of the Government.

'Mrs. Pankhurst was already standing with the rest of her distinguished company on the steps of St. Stephen's entrance where they had been allowed to take up their position. I stepped forward to join the deputation when the police obstructed me. . . . I saw several of our members flung repeatedly like myself into the crowd. . . . Our women were knocked about, tripped up, their arms and fingers twisted, their bodies doubled under and then forcibly thrown, if indeed they did not drop stunned to the ground. . . . During many hours, that game of

pitch and toss played with the agonized and quivering bodies of women and girls went on unchecked.'

The women would not yield, But that Black Friday struggle made them think again that property, rather than their persons, might henceforth pay the price of votes for women.

A sensation was caused next morning when the magistrate was informed that the Home Secretary, Mr. Winston Churchill, having had the 'whole matter under consideration', had decided on the ground of public policy that 'on this occasion no public advantage would be gained by proceeding with the prosecution'. No evidence was offered and the arrested women were discharged. Public policy apparently meant election policy, because hundreds of women had already been prosecuted and imprisoned for taking precisely the same action.

The newspapers broke into posters, headlines, and comments: 'Electioneering Tactics'—'Government Afraid to Prosecute Suffragettes'—'We suppose that Mr. Churchill is afraid of raising new opposition during the General Election,' said one paper. 'If he had any hopes of conciliating the women, they have been disappointed, for the true motive of his conduct has been at once recognized.'

Inside the House of Commons, during the five hours' struggle outside, M.P.s had debated the issue. 'Why should the House be dissolved now?' asked one member, Mr. Sanderson, when there were 'subjects of great gravity, unfortunately, to be discussed' and 'some think Woman's Suffrage is one of these'. He would tell his constituents that 'Mr. Asquith had dissolved Parliament because he dare not face the subjects he has got to face'.

The representative women's deputation even then waiting outside to see the Prime Minister was mentioned by Mr. Kettle, who urged him to receive Mrs. Pankhurst and her colleagues. Sir Alfred Mond (later Lord Melchett) reminded Mr. Asquith of the unwisdom of alienating the electors by having two or three hundred women in prison, and he, too, urged him to receive the deputation. The outcome of the debate was that Mr. Asquith, while refusing to receive the deputation, promised to make a statement on woman suffrage.

The Prime Minister made this statement in the House of Commons six days before the dissolution. It reached us a few minutes later, as we were in session at Caxton Hall. So completely unsatisfactory was

it that Mrs. Pankhurst announced an immediate deputation of protest. Volunteers for this were more in number than ever. Mrs. Pankhurst was still speaking when the news arrived that the House had risen! We knew why! This was the Government's move to elude the deputation and avoid the political disadvantage of the imprisonment of women, at election time.

Mrs. Pankhurst was not for one moment at a loss. She led her deputation towards 10 Downing Street, the Prime Minister's official residence. The public were again in great strength in Parliament Square, awaiting her appearance and knowing nothing of the sudden and extraordinary rising of the House at that early hour. Mrs. Pankhurst took a new and uncrowded path to Downing Street, wishing to arrive quietly. When the crowds knew this, they moved towards the same point. The police had just time to form a single cordon across the narrow street. 'Mrs. Pankhurst with that look of silent courage, and patient, almost pathetic determination that everyone knows so well,' says an eyewitness, 'walked straight up against the police, straight into the midst of them. The deputation followed, hesitating no more than she. They pressed forward steadily from behind. I do not know how many of them were there—perhaps three hundred. Only for a moment, the cordon stood its ground. Under that pressure right against the centre, it struggled, it wavered and broke. Naturally, the women rushed forward through the gap with cries of triumph. The police lost all cohesion. Fighting desperately, they were in separate little groups or as isolated men, driven further up the street. Many of the women passed right through them and got clear up to the Prime Minister's house.'¹

Vivid accounts of 'The Battle of Downing Street' appeared in the London Press of the vigour of the struggle, of the determination of the women to reach their objective, though many were thrown to the ground and some fainted. Strong police reinforcements arrived and the unequal struggle ended in many arrests. The women had, as always, run great risk of bodily injury. They might be, and in some cases were, thrown down and hurt or bruised by blows. They knew this and they dreaded the danger they ran, but they were thinking of other less fortunate women and future generations. A cruel ordeal that battle, especially for those who were frail or not very young. Mrs. Pankhurst was in the midst of the struggle and all its danger. She had a marvellous way of remaining, in the midst of crowds and struggles, as calm and proudly

¹ Mr. H. W. Nevinnson, was correspondent, in *Votes for Women*.

dignified as a queen going to her coronation—or perhaps to the scaffold in some unrighteous rebellion against her proper majesty.

‘If Mr. Asquith had consented to see us yesterday,’ she said, ‘we could have spared him from making this blunder.’

The Prime Minister’s latest pledge for the new Parliament was alarmingly like his former ones; indeed, it was, on the face of it, even less satisfactory. It ran thus: ‘The Government will, if still in power, give facilities in the new Parliament for effectively proceeding with a Bill which is so framed as to admit of free amendment.’ The Government still took no direct responsibility for giving women the vote. The pledge gave no guarantee—in the bitter light of past experience it gave less than no guarantee—that the next Parliament would see the fulfilment of the Government’s pledge.

The Conciliation Committee objected strongly, and Lord Lytton declared that in two vital particulars the pledge failed to satisfy his committee: it did not apply specifically to the Conciliation Bill and it did not accede to the request for facilities in the coming Session of Parliament, but referred ‘to some unspecified Session in a future which no Government could, if it would, control’.

We declared an anti-Government policy for the General Election. There was little time for action, before Election Day had come and gone. Our Election manifesto contained this offer to the Government, in which we went a long way to meet them: ‘If Mr. Asquith will promise on behalf of the Government that the House of Commons shall be left free to carry a Votes for Women Bill into law next Session, we will at once withdraw opposition to the Government in this Election.’ Failing such a pledge, we appealed to the electors to ‘vote against the Government candidates, so as to defeat or at least weaken the Government who, while condemning the veto of the House of Lords, imposed an autocratic and irresponsible veto on the Conciliation Bill’.

Heckling Cabinet Ministers was again a feature of the W.S.P.U. election campaign. At the election meetings addressed by the Prime Minister and his Cabinet colleagues many searching questions were put and many apt interjections were made by Suffragettes before they were ejected. If the Suffragettes were barred out from doors, windows, skylights and other entrances, men interjected in their stead, for

fathers and husbands were now joining in the fight. In one memorable case a Yorkshire working man, while his wife was in prison in London, went to ask a votes-for-women question at a Cabinet Minister's meeting and got his leg broken in the process. For this he afterwards got £100 damages and those responsible got a rebuke from the judge. A companion questioner of the injured man, angered by this and by the events of Black Friday, was arrested for attempts to attack the Cabinet Minister in question and imprisoned for six weeks. The case was notable for the presence in the witness-box of the Cabinet Minister, who admitted in cross-examination that the ejections from his meetings had often been carried out with violence.

Our younger women, with admirable resource and devotion, did the impossible to get into Ministers' meetings. These brave girls would spend the whole day and night before a meeting hidden in dark corners of basements, in organs, in coal-holes, or would climb, often perilously, to the roof and crouch outside in rain, or in icy weather. All this that they might speak a word for justice to a Cabinet Minister and the electors assembled to hear him!

One Cabinet Minister complained that this had been going on for five years! It had indeed: we knew it to our cost. Five years had been needlessly taken from our lives, years which we should have wished to spend in the constructive citizen service of our country.

Windows were broken that same evening by women who flung stones of protest at the windows of Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Winston Churchill, Mr. Lewis Harcourt, and Mr. John Burns. More and more, our women were insisting that a broken window was a lesser evil than a broken body, besides being, seemingly, more impressive to political opponents. About one hundred and thirty women were arrested after one of the most self-sacrificing demonstrations ever made under the W.S.P.U. banner. Again the magistrate, Sir Albert de Rutzen, was informed that all save a few charges would be withdrawn and that the Government desired the rest of the accused to go free. Astonished, Sir Albert said: 'Let me understand! Are the police responsible for the course of action which is now taken?' The reply being in the negative, he remarked that it came from Cabinet Ministers. Sir Albert further said: 'Let me say that this is the first time in the whole of my thirty years' experience that I have ever heard of such a course.' The outcome was the discharge of numbers of the prisoners.

Protests by small groups of women continued and eventually no

fewer than seventy-five women were imprisoned, the Government intervening no further. Certainly our prisoners sought no compromise. Those who had broken windows plainly said so and gave their reasons for it. 'This is the result of the treatment given on Friday to our peaceful deputation in Parliament Square,' said one stone-thrower. 'I am a law-abiding woman but I have had to do this for political reasons,' said another. 'We have no alternative,' said the next prisoner, 'but to turn to militant action. It is Mr. Asquith and his colleagues who ought to be standing in the dock.'

The toil and struggle of 1910 were nearly over. We were planning now for 1911.

Two days before Christmas several of our prisoners were released, though sixteen sentenced to longer terms were to spend Christmas in prison. Mrs. Pankhurst presided at the meeting of welcome. Memorable speeches were made by the prisoners, among whom was Mrs. Pankhurst's sister, Mrs. Clarke. She was very much loved by our members and their feeling for her was expressed that day by another of the prisoners, Mrs. Massy, who spoke of what her presence in prison had meant to them. Aunt Mary was, for all her gentleness, eloquent in an intense and very moving way, and brave to a degree. Her exquisite loyalty, as sister and as member of the Union, to Mother as leader was evidence of her remarkable quality and high political intelligence. Now, she spoke of the thoughts that had been hers in prison. She told of a sermon preached by the prison chaplain on ministry, and of the reflections to which this had moved her. A minister, the chaplain had said, was a servant; Christ came into the world as a minister; He came to serve. Aunt Mary's mind had turned, as she sat in the prison chapel, to those other Ministers, Cabinet Ministers. She had wondered whether, had they been present to hear that sermon, to see women in prison for the sake of the vote, and ordinary prison inmates there, largely because of wrong social conditions, they would feel satisfied with their own ministry—whether they might not understand the need also of the political ministry of women.

A few hours later, on Christmas Day, in the midst of a family gathering, Aunt Mary said she was tired and went to lie down. Very soon Mother went upstairs to see her. She was dead.

1911—Coronation Year

Starting a Year of Hope—The Second Reading—Next Session Never Comes—A Real Opportunity—Coronation and Procession—The Fear of Amendments—Deputation and the Consequences—Torpedoed

NINETEEN HUNDRED AND ELEVEN was Coronation Year. Never had a year begun in so much hope. It might be Coronation Year for the women's cause as well as for the King¹ and Queen.

True, the same Government was in office after the General Election, but their power of resistance would be no greater than before, while our resources were greater and public opinion more than ever with us.

Our great good fortune was that three members of the Conciliation Committee won the three first places in the ballot giving them the right to introduce a Private Member's Bill. This again assured for the Conciliation Bill its second reading in the House of Commons. It also meant that the Conciliation Bill would have a claim, exceeding that of any rival and wrecking measure, to the facilities promised by the Government.

A Liberal of influence, Sir George Kemp, Member for North-West Manchester, who had gained one of the three places in the ballot, undertook to introduce the Bill whose second reading was set down for the first week in May.

Two months of vigilance and tremendous effort were before us, but naturally we did not grudge that.

This was the sixth year since our Battle of the Marne in October 1905. We had worked with constantly increasing intensity in an ascending campaign—not only militant but also educational. We had shown no reaction and we had felt none. Tired in body we could be,

¹ King George V.

but the enemy never knew it, and somehow we recovered on the march. Now there was before us another height to scale.

Mother, in a New Year Manifesto to her forces, said: 'The year 1911 has come and with it there rises in the heart and mind of thousands of women an eager longing that this may be "the wonder year" that shall witness the peaceful settlement of the long and weary struggle for the political freedom of womanhood.' Yet, if the opportunity of a peaceful settlement were rejected by the Government the women's fight would go on, for, said she: 'As year follows upon year, the reasons for our agitation increase. Each new year of legislation affecting women and their rights and interests is a call to renewed effort, and women in rapidly increasing numbers respond to the call and press into our ranks.'

The Australian Senate now gave their support to the women of the Mother Country by resolving that 'This Senate is of opinion that the extension of the suffrage to the women of Australia for States and Commonwealth Parliament has had the most beneficial results. It has led to the more orderly conduct of elections. It has given a great prominence to legislation particularly affecting women and children, although the women have not taken up such questions to the exclusion of others of wider significance. In matters of defence and Imperial concern they have proved themselves as far-seeing and discriminating as men. Because this reform has brought nothing but good, we respectfully urge that all nations enjoying representative government would be well advised in granting votes to women.'

It was further resolved that: 'a copy of the foregoing Resolution be cabled to the British Prime Minister'.

We were certain of an even greater majority for the Conciliation Bill in the new Parliament than in the old. All, therefore, depended upon the Government's action after the second reading. We decided to prepare the most imposing peaceful demonstration that we could imagine, and a great women's procession and Pageant of Empire to proceed through London at mid-summer. Meantime, as a matter of routine, we should fill the large Queen's Hall once every week, and the Albert Hall in the spring, fill other great halls throughout the country, and hold mass meetings in parks, on commons, in market-places; and smaller meetings in schoolrooms, in drawing-rooms, at street corners, in villages. This was our every-year programme. Our difficulty was in finding bigger things to do! Militant as she was,

Mother was leading the greatest of the non-militant campaigns and she personally did a far greater non-militant work as a speaker than anyone else. The other Woman Suffrage Societies, of course, had their own important plans of propaganda.

The Conciliation Bill was unique in this: never has such continuous and truly national support, representative of all classes and parties, been behind any measure brought before Parliament. On one platform, under the auspices of the Men's League for Woman Suffrage, spoke the Earl of Selborne (Member of a former Conservative Government and son-in-law of the ex-Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury) and Mr. George Lansbury, M.P., later leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party. Both, with the Liberal Chairman of the meeting, demanded that the Conciliation Bill be made law that Session.

Cabinet Ministers themselves had—last year—bidden us hope for votes this year. Mr. Augustine Birrell had said to a deputation in 1910: 'My own strong opinion is that when Parliament meets next year this question will have to be decided.' Sir Edward Grey, even while he made himself Mr. Asquith's mouthpiece in denying facilities for the Conciliation Bill in 1910, had said to the Suffragists of his constituency that in his opinion facilities ought to be found for the Bill 'next year'. Mr. Runciman, yet another Government Minister, had spoken in the same sense.

The Prime Minister's own pre-election pledge was that 'The Government will give facilities in the next Parliament for effecting proceeding with a Bill which is so framed as to permit of free amendment.' Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Winston Churchill had therefore no longer any ground for tactics such as they had used against the Conciliation Bill in 1910.

'Keep your word', was all we asked the Government this Session. And what a graceful thing it would be to gladden women and set them politically free in Coronation Year!

Liberal support for the Conciliation Bill on the score of its democratic character was vigorously expressed by the Chairman of the Welsh Party in the House of Commons, Mr. Ellis Griffith, who exploded the argument that the Bill did not go far enough, by his reminder that it had already passed the Commons by a majority of 110 votes, whereas a wider measure had secured a majority of only 32 votes. 'I have heard people say that militant methods are alienating supporters but I do not think that there would be a movement at all

if it had not been for the militant part of it. . . . Our thanks are due to those women who have brought the matter to its present position. They have shown, not simply impulsive action, but sustained and consistent action. They possess high ideals and they have shown themselves willing to bear insult and ridicule and humiliation on behalf of their ideals.'

The Parliament (Lords Veto) Bill now passed its second reading in the House of Commons and we did not fail to notice the admission of the Liberal *Daily News* that this happened 'in a House half empty and in an atmosphere of sleep'.

Naturally we were not blindly trustful; poignant former experience had taught us the need of watchfulness. Mother, at our first Albert Hall meeting of 1911, recapitulated the suffrage hopes so many times frustrated: 'Can it be wondered that in the twentieth century educated, intelligent women,' she said, 'should insist upon the status of citizenship!'

Very appropriately, we had as a speaker that evening a woman voter from Australia, Miss Vida Goldstein, President of the Women's Political Association of Victoria. It was at this meeting that the composer Dame Ethel Smyth presented to the W.S.P.U. the 'March of the Women', the words being written by Miss Cicely Hamilton. This took its place with our other marching song, the music of which was the 'Marseillaise'. As always at these great rallies, money again spoke, and the £100,000 campaign fund which when the meeting began stood at £91,000 was increased to £96,500.

The sponsor of the Conciliation Bill, Sir George Kemp, soon afterwards publicly acclaimed the Bill as being at once moderate and democratic and as giving the vote to those women who most needed it. He felt that there was a lack of sincerity in nearly all the arguments brought against the Bill and what he wanted was sincerity both from those who supported and from those who opposed it, who did not always state the real grounds of their opposition. 'I had the fortune to be present last evening,' he said, 'at a supper at which all present stated their opposition to granting the vote to women. One man was sincere enough to give his reason. "I do not want it," he said, "because I should like all women to be slaves."' "

Sir George Kemp further said, in words truly prophetic, considering what was to happen three years later: 'I am very anxious that women shall have the vote now in this critical time, when we do not

know what is before us. We always turn to women in the great crises of our lives and we ought to have the benefit of their co-operation. . . . I believe that it will be greatly to the advantage not only of women, but of the nation, aye, of the Empire too, that they should join in our counsels at the earliest possible period.'

Militancy or no militancy at Coronation time! This was now the issue. The Empire was to be in London through its official representatives, who would gather there for the Coronation and Imperial Conference. Unofficial visitors in their thousands would choose this year to come to the Old Country. Guests from every land under heaven would be drawn to London. The tidings of our militancy had reached them all. The Suffragettes held the centre of the world stage.

Militancy at Coronation time would mean indicting the Liberal British Government at the bar of Imperial opinion. Militancy at Coronation time would be painful to us as marring the harmony proper to such a season, but it would be the expression of the truth that we could not fully rejoice while the offence and indignity remained of the Constitutional outlawry of women.

The issue rested with the Government and their treatment of our cause.

We knew their past methods too well. Had not the great Gladstone himself said 'Justice delayed is justice denied'? Votes tomorrow but never votes today. In order to escape being pestered, shamed, and humiliated under the concentrated gaze of the whole Empire and the whole world, Mr. Asquith and his colleagues might speak fair words and plan unfair deeds.

No one could call our demand for this Session unreasonable. The time of the House of Commons was less charged with business than it would be later and members of the Government had expressly told us to claim and to expect facilities in 1911. Mr. (afterwards Sir Walter) Runciman, had said even so recently as 25th October 1910: 'My suggestion is that you concentrate on securing that the Bill be introduced as early as possible next Session and that time shall be given in order that it may be dealt with in 1911.' Sir Edward Grey and Mr. Augustine Birrell had advised us to the same effect. But the Government's pledge for last Parliament had failed. We should trust their pledge for this Parliament—when it had been fulfilled.

The House of Commons voted the second reading of the Conciliation Bill by the greatly increased majority of 167 votes. The Party leaders, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Balfour, and the rest, took no part in the Debate, apparently by agreement. Sir George Kemp urged in favour of the Bill that it would give votes to the women who most needed them—women who had to face domestic problems and the rough and tumble of the world, working and paying their way and often maintaining dependants like any man voter. He claimed the promised Government facilities for the measure after its second reading. 'I have always been in favour of giving the vote to women,' he said, 'but I believe that now there are obvious signs of unhappiness throughout the kingdom. It is our duty to cure this and not drive it inward to the hurt and harm of our constitution. I believe that women possess qualities that men do not possess and that they possess them in a higher degree. I believe that they have a greater sense of intuition, a subtler perception and a greater capacity for self-sacrifice. Perhaps they do not see so much as men the value of compromise, for they have higher ideals. I think that this House might sacrifice a certain amount of the spirit of compromise, if at the same time we raise the level of our ideals.'

A Conservative Member, Mr. Goulding, who had also drawn a place in the ballot, seconded the Bill, saying that it was absurd that a large portion of the community should never be consulted in regard to the laws that were made, simply because they were women, and he predicted that if votes were given to women all political parties would bestir themselves in friendly rivalry to remedy the laws of which women complained. Labour support for the Bill came from Mr. Lansbury, Wales spoke for the Bill through the Welsh Party's chairman, Mr. Ellis Griffith, and Mr. Hugh Law raised an Irish voice in its support. Mr. Joseph King and Lord Hugh Cecil concentrated upon claiming facilities for the further progress of the Bill. Lord Hugh's argument requires quotation here in view of the sequel. 'From the appearance of the Front Benches, it would seem that the Olympians have determined to leave the contest and to let the Greeks and the Trojans fight it out themselves,' he said. 'The Prime Minister stated that the Government would give facilities for proceeding with the Bill if it were so framed as to admit of free amendment. I understand that the Bill is so framed.' He further declared that the supporters of the Bill would have 'just ground to complain if the Government

destroy the Bill, not by the votes of a majority of this House or the other House, but by a final decree of their own, withholding from it the time necessary for its passage into law, and I think that to do so would be to treat those who, judiciously or injudiciously, are terribly in earnest, very hardly indeed.'

A scrutiny of the vote that followed the Debate was interesting. Mr. Asquith, who was absent, had paired against with Mr. Balfour who was for the Bill, Mr. Winston Churchill was absent, unpaired. Mr. Birrell paired in favour of the Bill. Sir Edward Grey and Mr. Runciman were both present, though silent, and both voted for the Bill; Mr. Lloyd George also voted for the Bill.

That magnificent majority justified every hope. It could mean nothing less than 'facilities this Session'.

We held a big meeting to celebrate the second reading triumph and to claim the promised facilities. Our joy was especially for the pioneers, the old ladies who had worked for the vote for nearly fifty years—of whom so many in their age had joined this new, *young*, militant movement, believing it held the assurance of final victory. 'For the sake of the older women who are still with us,' Mother said, 'that they may see the vote won this year—let us work as we have never worked before.'

No time was lost by the Conciliation Committee. They quickly asked Mr. Asquith to receive a deputation. Individual M.P.s of all political parties were of the opinion, expressed by Mr. Touche, that 'The Government can easily give facilities this year, if they are in earnest about their pledge.'

The triumphant second reading of the Bill was followed by a petition presented by the Lord Mayor of Dublin who, in the exercise of a right shared only by the Lord Mayor of London, appeared in person at the Bar of the House of Commons. It was a picturesque and historic ceremony. The Speaker had taken his place and, prayers being said, the Serjeant-at-Arms announced that the Lord Mayor of Dublin was without. 'Admit him!' was the Speaker's command. Shouldering the Mace, the Serjeant-at-Arms admitted the Lord Mayor who, arrayed in his official robes, scarlet and befurred, wearing his gold chain of office and carrying a white wand, advanced to the Bar of the House.

Before him were borne the Irish Mace and Sword of State, and on his either hand walked the Town Clerk and an Alderman. 'What have you there, my Lord Mayor of Dublin?' asked the Speaker. 'A petition from the right honourable the Lord Mayor, the aldermen and burgesses of Dublin,' was the reply. 'Let it be read,' said the Speaker. The Town Clerk read the petition 'to the honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland' that for reasons therein set forth, 'the Bill to confer the Parliamentary franchise on women may be passed through your honourable House during the present Session of Parliament'.

Although Dublin had this special right of appearance at the Bar of the House, that city was not alone in officially supporting the Conciliation Bill. Sixty-nine other municipalities carried resolutions in its favour, including Birmingham, Birkenhead, Bradford, Canterbury, Cardiff, Chester, Coventry, Derby, Huddersfield, Hull, Jarrow, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Sheffield, Sunderland, Swansea, Tynemouth, West Bromwich, Wolverhampton, Edinburgh, and Glasgow.

Pending the rather tardy Government statement as to facilities, Sir George Kemp and Mr. Philip Snowden gave notice of a motion in the House of Commons which in effect called for facilities for the Conciliation Bill. Mr. Asquith did not hasten to give the Government's answer.

We filled this time of suspense with preparations for the great procession and Empire pageant, also with recruiting for militant action in case of need. Volunteers were many, they were resolute and courageous. A characteristic letter said: 'In the event of action being necessary, I should like my name added to the list of danger-duty volunteers. I am keeping the date of my summer holiday open to meet such emergencies.' A working woman, a typical voter-to-be under the Conciliation Bill, volunteered in these terms: 'I know what it is. I was left a widow with four children to bring up—the eldest was six and the youngest a baby of eleven months—and I had to work for them. It is cruel and we ought to have the vote. I wish I could help you more. . . .'

Incessant were the appeals to the Government to give facilities for the Conciliation Bill that Session. Time and place would be harder to find next Session than this, argued the *Manchester Guardian*, insisting that 'if Mr. Asquith wishes to keep his promise in substance and

effect or perhaps even to keep it at all, it is clear that the time for keeping it is now.'

The Conciliation Committee was waiting for Mr. Asquith's consent to receive a deputation and the group of Liberal M.P.s also sought an interview with him for the same purpose of requesting facilities for the Bill. Still not a hint from the Government as to their answer.

Silence was broken at last. Mr. Lloyd George—not the Prime Minister—gave it, in reply to Lord Wolmer, who asked in the House of Commons whether the Government would, in view of the large majority the Bill had commanded, give facilities for its 'passage into law this Session'. Mr. Lloyd George said that the Government recognized that, since the Conciliation Bill fulfilled their condition that it be so framed as to admit of free amendment, it was 'their duty in this Parliament to give the promised facilities'. But not in this Session! 'The Cabinet,' he said, 'had come to the conclusion that their own proposals for legislation would fully occupy a prolonged Session' and 'that without jeopardizing the fortunes of these measures they could not allot to the Woman Suffrage Bill this year such an amount of time as its importance demands.'

Mr. Lloyd George had not finished. 'The Government,' he went on, 'will be prepared, next Session, when the Bill has again been read a second time, either as the result of obtaining a good place in the ballot or (if that does not happen) by the grant of a Government day for the purpose, to give a week (which they understand to be the time suggested as reasonable by the promoters) for its further stages.'

A fire of questions followed.

'On what authority is the statement made that the sponsors of the Bill would be satisfied with a week?' asked Mr. (later Viscount) Philip Snowden.

'Or that the opponents of the Bill would be satisfied with a week?' said Mr. F. E. Smith (afterwards Lord Birkenhead).

'Are we to take it that this week is equivalent in the eyes of the Government to the "full facilities" promised by the Government in November?' inquired Mr. Leif Jones.

'It is understood—I cannot say upon what authority, the representations were made by friends of the movement—' said Mr. Lloyd George, 'that in their judgment a week would satisfy the requirements

of the promoters of the measure and the Government at the present stage cannot see their way to go beyond giving facilities for a week.'

A week and less would certainly have sufficed, if fair play were assured. But with members of the Government throwing apples of discord and scattering bones of contention during the further stages of the Bill's progress, as they had done in the second reading Debate in 1910, a hard and fast week and nothing but a week would not do. No wonder, then, that Mr. Leif Jones, himself a Liberal, returned to the charge: 'I press for an answer to my question. Are we to take it that in the view of the Government a week of time in the next Session is the equivalent of the full facilities promised by the Government for this Bill?' 'May I ask,' interposed Mr. Keir Hardie at this point, 'whether in the event of only a week being allocated to this measure, the Government will by means of the closure make it imperative that the Bill will go through in that time?'

'I cannot give an assurance of that kind,' replied Mr. Lloyd George. His further words opened up a painful vista of yet another blockage or wreckage of the Bill in the next Session, to be followed by another effort in the Session after that!

The Conciliation Committee immediately protested. They questioned the Government as to the precise meaning of Mr. Lloyd George's statement.

On the motion for the adjournment of the House that night, Mr. Philip Snowden again called upon the Government to give facilities in the present Session.

Nothing could surprise the W.S.P.U. where the Government were concerned, but even we had hoped for a better thing than this. 'No time' was an obvious excuse. There never would be more time than now. Next Session never comes, was our first thought as Mr. Lloyd George's reply reached us. The callous disregard of our efforts would have wounded our feelings, had we not learnt to regard politicians as in some sense dehumanized and incapable of regarding non-voters as entitled to ordinary consideration. That is a drawback of democracy—that its operators are tempted to think only in terms of votes. At least we had the remedy of action. We needed not to blow off the lid with anger. The steam of our determination could find its proper expression in deeds.

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Militancy or no militancy at Coronation time was still hanging in the balance—for the Government it seemed, and we were told, had perhaps not said their last word. The Prime Minister had yet to speak, and inside and outside the House there were negotiations to get from him a better statement than had come from Mr. Lloyd George.

We were rapidly adding to our 'Deputation List' and women in greater numbers than ever before were enrolling for active service.

At this point Sir Edward Grey intervened. At a banquet at the National Liberal Club to honour Mr. Andrew Carnegie for his service in the cause of international peace, Sir Edward Grey made a bid for national peace by an unexpected word about the Conciliation Bill. 'If you will bear with me for a moment,' he said, 'I should like to say something which is not strictly relevant to this toast but by way of personal explanation and because I think it is important that it should be said now.' Why had it to take precedence on this occasion of universal peace, to which the evening had been devoted? Because there were women to be pacified and Suffragette militancy to be warded off, at a season of all seasons when militancy would be most unwelcome.

Sir Edward Grey wanted, he said, to 'prevent a misapprehension about what the Government had said on woman suffrage'. The Government's offer of a definite opportunity for the House of Commons to pass the Bill was, Sir Edward insisted, 'not a bogus offer'.

He continued:

'I should like to remove all the misconceptions which I hear are possible with regard to that offer. The Government are pledged to no more than a week. But they are not pledged at the end of a week. If the House of Commons votes to proceed, the Government will not step in and intervene.

'It is suggested,' he went on, 'that the week might be useless, because the promoters of the Bill will be helpless butts for obstruction with no powers of defence, making themselves and the Bill ridiculous. That is not the intention of the Government either. The intention is that those interested in the Bill . . . should have a fair chance for defending themselves against obstruction and the making of reasonable progress.'

So far as words went, Sir Edward Grey thus modified appreciably the previous statement of Mr. Lloyd George. 'The whole question is now in a new situation,' he concluded, 'in which it is open for those

who are in favour of it to devote the interval between this year and next, to so combining their efforts as to make the best use of what is a real opportunity in which effective progress may be made.'

'Not a bogus offer!' 'A real opportunity!' Yet reason for giving this offer and opportunity in 1912 existed now in 1911. Delays are dangerous and especially dangerous in politics.

Doubt of the Government's policy turned, in many quarters, to satisfaction when that policy was thus expounded by Sir Edward. 'You can trust him.' 'Grey is an honourable man,' we heard.

We of the W.S.P.U. had not learnt to draw such distinctions between one Liberal leader and the other. They had all, in our sad experience, appeared 'much of a muchness'.

'We still regard the *present* Session as the golden opportunity for giving votes to women,' said we.

Obscurity still prevailed, even as to the facilities for next Session. Lord Lytton, by letter, asked the Prime Minister whether his Committee rightly understood that the proffered week was intended by the Government not merely as an opportunity for a prolonged academic debate, but that if the Bill had in that time passed through committee, further days would be provided for the report and third reading stages and that the ordinary closure facilities would be available as in the case of a Government Bill. Lord Lytton added: 'We cannot help being disappointed that no further progress is to be made with our Bill this Session, but if you can reassure us on the points I have mentioned you will remove a good deal of very natural anxiety.'

Mr. Asquith replied that 'the week' will be interpreted with reasonable elasticity. 'The Government though divided in opinion as to the merits of the Bill are unanimous in their determination to give effect, not only in the letter but in the spirit, to the promise in regard to facilities which I made on their behalf before the last General Election.'

The pledge to be kept not only in the letter but in the spirit! That did sound like full facilities. 'Yet why the Government, having undertaken to give full facilities next Session, should hesitate to give them now is a mystery impossible to penetrate,' I wrote at the time. This mystery was soon to become plain.

Meanwhile, we had to decide our policy. The Government's

parleying had been long drawn out. Coronation Day had almost come. If a militant response to the refusal of facilities in 1911 was to be made and timed effectively, we must decide and act. A very weighty reason for refraining from militancy was that the Conciliation Committee asked us to accept the Prime Minister's promise, as they themselves had decided to accept it. Our great appreciation of their work and our sense of the value of that work, our strong wish to retain their co-operation made us wish to accept their advice and not bring their movement of conciliation to an end while there was any remaining possibility of its success. Naturally if this Conciliation experiment were to fail we should then resume the entire and independent conduct of our policy. This was initiated by women and from first to last conducted by women. The help of men was welcomed but a women's movement must be led by women.

The responsibility of decision was great. On the one hand there was the danger of being tricked by a worthless political promise, on the other hand there was the desirability of keeping with us, in understanding and sympathy, the Conciliation Committee, the large House of Commons majority which supported the Conciliation Bill, and the general public and vast numbers of as yet non-militant women.

In strict logic we ought to accept nothing less than immediate 1911 facilities for the Conciliation Bill. The Government's refusal to let it be carried in the appropriate atmosphere of Coronation time was a positive danger signal. But by acting upon the real facts we might, at that special juncture, lose more than we should gain. It was not wise for us militants to risk breaking the Conciliation movement. If it were to be broken—and we hoped it might yet steer the Conciliation Bill safely to harbour—then the Government, not we, should break it. If renewed militancy became inevitable, better let the Government make the need for it clear. Better let the entire responsibility for the good or ill-fate of the Conciliation Bill rest upon the Government! We would let neither the Government nor anyone else have the possibility of arguing that but for our resumption of militancy in 1911 the Conciliation Bill would have passed in 1912.

Then our national feeling and loyalty were too strong to make militancy at Coronation time anything but painful to us. We were glad to be able to justify to ourselves a non-militant policy.

Another strong, decisive factor in my own mind was the desire to

win the vote, without the more drastic methods that I knew must be forced upon us, if the Government should continue much longer to withhold the vote. At least we might spin out the milder militancy a little further.

Furthermore, even we felt that this new pledge for 1912 might be dependable. Sceptical as we had learnt from hard experience to be of the Government's pledges, we were tempted to trust them this time.

So we resolved to accept the Government's pledge 'in the spirit and in the letter'. We yielded to the spirit of the hour. Our great procession, held a few days before the King and Queen were crowned, became a Coronation procession. Our message to the King and Queen, to which we received the Queen's reply, read thus: 'Our Women's Social and Political Union tender to their Royal and Imperial Majesties, the King and Queen, their loyal and devoted service. May their reign be long and prosperous and their lives blessed with every happiness! May the Empire prosper under their guidance and advance in strength, in honour and in righteousness, and may men and women, rendered equal before the law, secure, by their united endeavour, a future greater than heretofore.'

A mountain peak of a year was 1911, and that June the world's happiest month for long to come. So with our movement, 27th June of Coronation Year saw the most joyous, beautiful and imposing of all our manifestations. 'The women have had triumphal processions before,' reported *The Times*, 'but this was beyond them all, in numbers and effect.'

The other societies joined with us in the march through London, Mrs. Fawcett at the head of her organization, Mrs. Despard at the head of hers, the many sectional suffrage societies, representing particular sections of women, such as the writers, the doctors, the actresses, the teachers and the rest. Women of all professions, trades and interests were there in their many thousands, women from every part of the kingdom and every part of the Empire, women from foreign lands. There was pageantry arranged by painters and sculptors. Queens and other great women of the past were represented, a hundred bands and countless flags and banners made the whole array beautiful to eye and ear. The processionists were so many that they marched five abreast. Mother walked at the head. Seven hundred women who had been prisoners for the vote had place of honour. The streets were thronged with cheering crowds.

It was Suffrage Day! The climax of all peaceful effort! In this direction there was nothing more left to do.

Our contingent, and as many others as could find room there, massed in the Albert Hall, where we resolved that 'This meeting rejoices in the coming triumph of the votes-for-women cause and pledges itself to turn to account the Prime Minister's pledge of full and effective facilities for the Women's Enfranchisement Bill'.

The Coronation over, we set ourselves to what Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence aptly called twelve months' hard labour! It would again be a year stolen from our life as citizens. We felt the injustice of making the suffrage campaign last forty-five, instead of forty-four, years since the first House of Commons' vote on women's enfranchisement. But we made the best of it, determined to re-merit in 1912 the success that ought to have been ours at latest in 1910.

The Conciliation Committee were manfully doing their part. Lord Lytton, at one of our meetings in the Queen's Hall, declared his intention to devote the whole of the intervening months to the cause. Many friendly M.P.s were showing vigilance in the Bill's behalf. Mr. Philip Snowden, at one of our meetings, warned us that opponents of the Bill were openly threatening to move widening amendments in the direction of Adult Suffrage which 'as there is no support in Parliament of Adult Suffrage would be wrecking amendments'. He nevertheless declared his hope that the Bill would safely pass and that 'at the next election women will vote'. Another warning of the danger of widening the Bill and so defeating it by losing its moderate supporters came from Mr. Arthur (later Lord) Ponsonby, who said that even a quarter of a loaf would be better than no bread and that he would support the Conciliation Bill. Lord Robert Cecil (Viscount Cecil of Chelwood), another active champion, rejoiced that we had won for 1912 'an absolutely substantial and definite pledge from the Government'.

He also warned us of widening amendments. One such proposal was to give votes to 'all women married to qualified voters'. That, Lord Robert pointed out, would mean that instead of the one million women voters who would be enfranchised under the Conciliation Bill there would be some five or six million women voters.

We had already heard of this project. Mr. Lloyd George was its

author, so rumour ran. Our view was that one million votes for women were better than none! Even by means of a Government measure, to give six million votes to women all at once would in those days have been a big task. But to insist upon putting six million women aboard the little cockle-shell of a Private Member's Bill was inviting fatal shipwreck. Our main concern was not with the *numbers* of women to be enfranchised but with the removal of a stigma upon womanhood as such. Even if the vote were to be given only to women with black hair or to women of a certain height, it would mean that the barrier against women as women had been broken. However, we would not let mere rumour respecting the attitude of any member of the Government dismay us.

An alarm was, however, suddenly raised when Mr. Lloyd George, in reply to a question in the House of Commons, was understood to say that the facilities promised to the Conciliation Bill might be given to some rival measure. Lord Lytton at once asked Mr. Asquith for more light on the matter, since Mr. Lloyd George's statement had 'aroused all the doubts and misgivings which had been completely set at rest by the assurance contained in your letter to me of June 15th'.

Mr. Asquith said that he had 'no hesitation in saying that the promise made by and on behalf of the Government in regard to facilities for the Conciliation Bill will be adhered to both in the spirit and in the letter'.

Mother, who had been covering anew all the old ground, now decided that she would make another visit to Canada and the United States. I think she went as much for a holiday as anything. 'The voyage there and back always rests me,' she used to say. Indeed, they were almost the only rest she ever got. So away she sailed, with the comforting assurance that she had done her part for the time being towards the victory of 1912, that the rest of us would be working during her absence and that she would be back in time for another big campaign, before the Bill was due for debate in 1912.

Mother had been not many days in America when the Government 'exploded a mine', as *The Times* expressed it, under the Conciliation Bill.

The Prime Minister received a deputation introduced by Mr. Arthur Henderson, a deputation which did not concentrate upon the

issue of Woman Suffrage, but complained of all the various anomalies of the then existing Franchise law and asked for Adult Suffrage, 'using the term in the broadest sense to include women'. Mr. Asquith jumped at this idea of giving votes to more men, even to all men! He declared that 'a man's right to vote depends upon his being a citizen'. The basis of women's claim to vote was, of course, precisely the same—but Mr. Asquith did not recognize that. He assured Mr. Henderson that the Government, next Session, would introduce a Bill putting the franchise on this simple and rational foundation that considering the Government's former pledge to women, Mr. Asquith had to say something on the point. The Conciliation Bill, he said, would receive the facilities promised, and the newly promised Franchise Bill, for men only, would be introduced in such a form that it would be open to the House of Commons, if it so pleased, to add a Woman Suffrage Amendment. Mr. Asquith explained that he said this 'lest it be supposed he had gone back on anything he had promised in the past'!

A cruel blow was this! Even the Liberal *Daily Chronicle* had to admit that 'the Government's policy may cut the ground from under the Conciliation Bill while on the other hand reducing the support at present available for the cause of Woman Suffrage'. 'Mr. Asquith's bombshell will blow the Conciliation Bill to bits,' said the *Evening News*.

Naturally we condemned this pronouncement. By associating woman suffrage with their policy of Manhood Suffrage, the Government had made it a Party *question*, while refusing to make it a Party *measure*. The Government, we protested, were seeking to destroy the composite majority behind the Conciliation Bill, by alienating Unionists and Moderate Liberals, and so rendering impossible a non-party solution of the woman suffrage question.

We militants returned to our original demand—that the Government as such should take full responsibility for initiating and carrying into law a measure giving votes to women.

The mockery of it was that there had been no real work done to bring about a wider franchise, and the Manhood Suffrage Bill was the fruit of our agitation for votes for women! 'With absolutely no demand, no ghost of a demand for more votes for men and with . . . beyond all cavil . . . a very strong demand for votes for women, the Government announces their Manhood Suffrage Bill,' was the accurate summing-up of one of the weekly Reviews.

Women Suffragists themselves unanimously condemned the Government's declaration, and Mrs. Fawcett, the non-militant leader, declared: 'If it has been Mr. Asquith's object to enrage every Woman Suffragette to the point of frenzy, he could not have acted with greater perspicacity.'

Mrs. Bernard Shaw exactly expressed the sentiments of Women Suffragettes whether militant or non-militant when she said that Mr. Asquith's speech filled her with an 'impulse of blind rage'.

We militants, however, were not frenzied, we were firm. We were moved not by an impulse of blind rage but by the determination to act.

We announced a deputation to the Prime Minister and Mr. Lloyd George, to be led in Mother's absence by Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence.

Mr. Asquith consented to receive the deputation, indeed he had 'already arranged', he said, 'to receive a deputation from various Suffrage Societies, including ours if we desired it'.

Mr. Asquith and Mr. Lloyd George together received the representatives of nine suffrage societies at 10 Downing Street, the W.S.P.U. being represented by Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, Mrs. Tuke, Annie Kenney, Lady Constance Lytton, Elizabeth Robins, and myself.

The night before the deputation we met, thousands strong, in the Albert Hall. Mother, who of course had been all the time in close touch by cable, sent to the meeting this message: 'I share your indignation at the Government's insult to women and am ready to renew the fight.' She seemed actually present with us. Waves of cheering were the response to her words.

We called upon the Government to abandon the Manhood Suffrage Bill and introduce in its stead a measure giving equal franchise rights to men and women. If the Prime Minister refused this demand, Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence would, she announced, lead a protest against that refusal. 'The Conciliation Bill is dead,' she said, 'slain not by our hand. Militancy is not dead. The Government have nothing to fear from women except militancy. It was to stop militancy that the pledge was given for 1912. They wanted to get the Coronation over without unpleasantness. I think we have got to do more fighting.'

The deputation duly arrived at 10 Downing Street. Mr. Asquith that day was rosy-faced and smiling. He might have been Father Christmas with votes for women in his bag of presents. Mr. Lloyd George was pale and lowering. A visitor from afar, straying into the

room, would have taken Mr. Asquith for the champion of votes for women and Mr. Lloyd George for the hardened and implacable anti-Suffragist. Mrs. Fawcett briefly introduced the deputation and called on me to express our views. ' . . . Let the Government abandon the Manhood Suffrage Bill and introduce in its stead a measure giving precisely equal franchise rights to men and women!' I said. 'Let the measure be carried in the next Session of Parliament that it may have the benefit of the new Parliament Act! Let the Government stand or fall by the Bill as a whole just as they would by any other measure on their programme! We urge you to deal as fairly by us as you would by men; we, too, are by right citizens; we too want to work as citizens for the good of the country!'

Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence then spoke of the Manhood Suffrage Bill as an insult to women and a sign of hostility to their cause. 'The W.S.P.U.,' she said, 'unanimously support the demand and unless the assurance we ask is conceded, the W.S.P.U. will be driven to take up the challenge of hostility which you have laid by your recent announcement.'

Lady Selborne and Lady Betty Balfour followed on behalf of their organizations, Lady Betty declaring it intolerable that the franchise should be changed for men until the political disability imposed upon women had been removed. Mrs. Despard, as representing the other Militant Society, the Women's Freedom League, protested against government without consent, and her fellow delegate Mrs. How-Martyn maintained that to take the demand for votes for women and convert it into Manhood Suffrage was both illiberal and the worst kind of class legislation.

Speaking for the Women Trade Unionists in the North of England, Miss Eva Gore-Booth said that the Government must not be surprised by the disappointment and bitterness caused by their announcement. Other speakers concurred. Mrs. Fawcett urged the Government to 'incorporate some form of Woman Suffrage' in their Franchise Bill and, then, in order to elucidate the Government's 'pledge', asked whether they intended to pass their Reform Bill through all its stages in 1912, and whether if a Woman Suffrage Amendment were adopted by the House of Commons the Government would regard the Amendment as an integral part of the Bill and defend it in all its further stages.

Mr. Asquith's manner in reply was all geniality, and his remarks

flowery with compliments to those who had addressed him. 'It was impossible,' he said, 'to listen to such speeches from ladies of so many classes, interests and areas in this great movement without realizing, as he believed they all did realize, the intensity of feeling which prevailed.' Renewing his 'pledge', Mr. Asquith solemnly affirmed that the Government's Bill would be redrafted on sufficiently broad lines to admit of amendments dealing with woman suffrage 'and that it would be a breach of the understanding if the Bill were not so drafted'. He further promised, in reply to Mrs. Fawcett's question, that the Government would regard any Woman Suffrage Amendment carried by the House of Commons as having become an integral part of the Bill and would certainly defend it in all its 'stages'.

Why then would the Government not include woman suffrage in their Reform Bill as originally introduced? We militants knew that the Government must see a great difference between the two procedures and that this difference was dangerous, and would indeed prove fatal. We could not, therefore, accept the Premier's 'pledge'.

'Miss Pankhurst, in a very able speech,' said Mr. Asquith, 'used one or two rather strong expressions to which of course I do not take any exception. She talked of terms of peace, presenting, I might say, a pistol in one hand and a dagger in the other at the Government. Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, too, used some expressions about being tricked and betrayed. Where does the trick come in? I am pointing out to you that the position of the Government is perfectly consistent. I quite understand Miss Pankhurst's position. She says it is our duty ourselves to introduce a Bill conferring the franchise on women on the same terms as men. It is an intelligible position but we have never promised to do anything of the kind. If you ask me why we don't do it, I will tell you once more: I am the head of the Government, and I am not going to make myself responsible for the introduction of a measure which I do not conscientiously believe to be in the best interests of the country.'

How, then, could we trust in his pledge to become responsible for the same measure of woman suffrage, after the House of Commons should have endorsed it? Mr. Asquith's own words were a warning against confiding in his pledge! All the more so were his next words: 'Miss Pankhurst thinks we should take the thing up and become ourselves the official sponsors of equality between the sexes in regard to the franchise. I understand and respect that point of view,

but it is one that the Government have consistently disclaimed from the first.' This statement was a flat contradiction of his pledge that *after the House of Commons had carried the votes for women amendment, the Government could certainly take it up and become its protagonists and official sponsors*, 'and would regard the amendment as an integral part of the Bill and defend it in all its stages'.

Mr. Asquith ended his discourse with the words '... That ought to satisfy you.' I said: 'We are not satisfied.' 'No,' said Mr. Asquith, 'I don't expect to satisfy you.'

Mr. Lloyd George, still pale and gloomy, briefly counter-signed Mr. Asquith's undertaking. 'The only thing I would say now is this,' he said, 'and I say it after twenty-one years' experience of Parliament—don't you commit yourselves too readily to the statement that this is a trick upon Woman Suffrage. If you find next year as a result of this "trick" that several millions of women have been added in a Bill to the franchise, and that this Bill has been sent to the House of Lords by the Government, and that the Government stand by this Bill, whatever the Lords do, those who have committed themselves in this ill-conditioned suggestion will look very foolish.'

'We shall not mind that, as long as we get the vote,' I answered him.

The other societies reserved their opinion until later. We all made respective pronouncements to the Press and at meetings. The non-militants regarded the Prime Minister's statement as 'a distinct advance in the political situation' and considered it now 'almost certain' that the enfranchisement of women would be realized next year. We militants were convinced of the contrary, greatly as we should have liked to share the non-militant optimism.

Rallying for protest at Caxton Hall, we 'condemned the Government's announcement of a Manhood Suffrage Bill, as a grave and unpardonable insult to women, firmly refused to allow the political enfranchisement of women to depend on a mere amendment to the Manhood Suffrage Bill, and demanded that the Government introduce and carry in the next session of Parliament a measure giving equal franchise to men and women'. We further resolved to 'enforce this reasonable demand upon the attention of the Government by vigorous and determined militant action'.

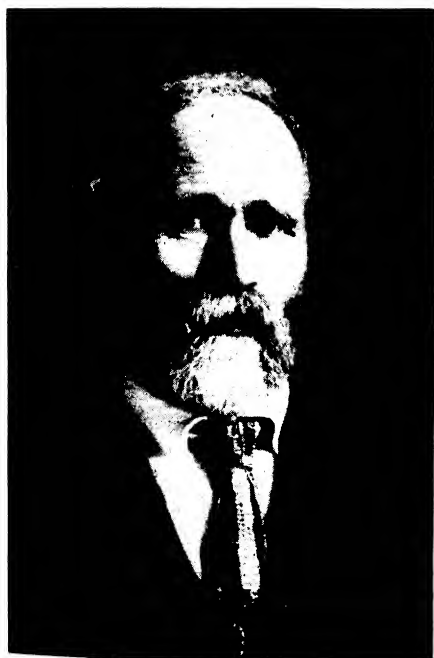
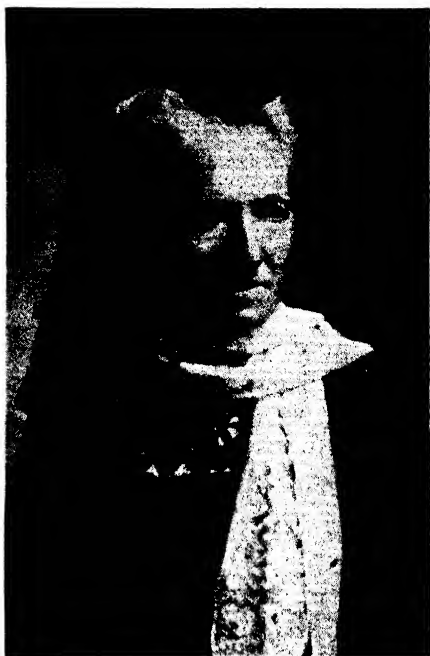
A deputation then set forth that would, unless forcibly beaten back by sheer brute force, 'protest on the floor of the House of

Commons in the presence of all the Members, against the deep insult of Manhood Suffrage that had been offered to the Womanhood of the country'. So saying, Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence led the way towards Parliament Square. Hundreds followed her, owing to a rumour that the police would resist the deputation at the doors of Caxton Hall. The general public had assembled in great numbers. The Government had made the usual preparations, which were, as a Press account remarked, 'exceedingly impressive', for the police 'stood in a double line', while 'strong bodies of them marched up and down, appearing from all sorts of hiding-places to take up their positions'. After noting the presence of an ambulance detachment 'which gave an air of gravity to the arrangements', the same report told of the efforts of the women to break through the police lines, and the 'thousands of people' who 'followed the movements of the police, who were subjected to hooting and booing'.

The leader of the deputation was arrested as well as two hundred and twenty others. Lady Constance Lytton, Mrs. Brailsford, Mrs. Marshall, Miss Wallace Dunlop, the Hon. Mrs. Haverfield, Miss Winifred Mayo, Miss Naylor, Miss Evelyn Sharp, were again among the arrested ones, and newcomers to this list of honour included Lady Sybil Smith, Miss Janie Allen, Mrs. Sadd Brown, Mrs. Mansell-Moullin, Miss Edith Downing, Miss Marie Pethick, Miss Janet Steer and Mrs. Janet Boyd, aunt of Viscountess Rhondda.

Window-breaking on a large scale took place that night. The experience of Black Friday had moved numbers of women to this course and they had been yet more moved thereto by the Government's latest method of blocking the way to Women's Enfranchisement. Government buildings, through whose windows had gone stony messages, included the War Office, the Home Office, the Foreign Office, the Treasury. The windows of the National Liberal Club were broken, the Liberal Publication Office, the residence of Mr. Harcourt and Mr. John Burns. Some shop windows were also broken.

The reason for window-breaking was given before the magistrate by one of the arrested women in these words: 'I did it to protest against the Government bringing in a Manhood Suffrage Bill when the real demand has been for votes for women.' Lady Constance Lytton said 'votes and riot are the only two forces of appeal to which the Government will respond. They refuse us votes; therefore we fall



Mabel Tuke
Keir Hardie

Mrs. Despard
Mary Gawthorpe



Dame Ethel Smythe
Victor Duval—Founder of Men's Political Union for
Women's Suffrage
Vera Holme

back on riot'. Lady Sybil Smith, charged with pushing a constable who was taking Miss Downing into custody, said she had acted deliberately as a protest against the Government's policy, because she considered that to enfranchise more men while as yet no women were enfranchised was an insult to the womanhood of the country. . . . 'The Conciliation Bill has been torpedoed.' The words were Mr. Lloyd George's. Exactly what the militants had known from the first! The torpedoing of the Conciliation Bill made the road clear, Lloyd George affirmed, 'for the insertion of an amendment which would include the working man's wife'. We only wished that it had! That explains, said he, 'the fury of those anti-Liberal women'. So he called us, whereas we contended that the Government themselves were anti-Liberal in their dealing with our cause. 'Nothing would they hate more,' he said, of us, 'than to see that carried next year.'

Mr. Lloyd George's words were not in accord with the fact. Our joy would have been boundless had we believed that the next year would see these millions of women enfranchised. But we knew that this would not happen and that there was on the contrary grave danger of an extension of the franchise for men only, which would build up against women a greater barrier than ever.

We were a good deal denounced by some newspapers for our renewed militancy, but others began to understand and sometimes even to acknowledge the method in our work. The *Nottingham Guardian*, for example, said that much nonsense had been spoken and written by those who 'have not studied the history of their own country', and so have not learnt that 'something in the nature of a political earthquake is always necessary' to get action on public questions. 'But for the Suffragettes and their militancy,' declared this newspaper, 'no progress would have been made until the crack of doom.'

Mother sent word to us that she would be soon with us again, taking her part in the struggle, and meantime she said: 'I am going to Canada to rouse the women of that vast Dominion to unite with the women of the Mother-country in the fight for justice.'

Mr. Lloyd George and Sir Edward Grey were to speak at a meeting arranged by the Women's Liberal Federation. All women applying for tickets had to sign a pledge not to interrupt the speakers, or even

to ask any question. Our questions to them were therefore printed on a handbill and given out at the door.

Perfect calm reigned therefore as the two speakers expounded to the audience of Liberal women the meaning of the Government's 'pledge'.

Sir Edward Grey had a fling at militancy, but admitted that 'before the Reform Bill of 1832, before men had votes, there was infinitely more violence than now'. Defending the Government's 'pledge' against our imputation of falsity, he insisted that the Government Reform Bill would be brought in and that a Woman Suffrage Amendment could and would be carried, for, said he: 'It is to me inconceivable that a House of Commons which has more than once, by large majorities, approved the principle of woman suffrage, should calmly proceed to pass through all its stages a Bill widening the suffrage for men without doing something to remove the barrier against women.'

He finally appealed to all to unite in regarding the Government Bill as 'the greatest opportunity woman suffrage has yet had'.

Mr. Lloyd George said ditto to Sir Edward Grey. 'He had,' he said, 'answered a long series of interrogatories, which have been administered through the Press.' Administered by us militants, of course! 'Our success is assured,' he concluded. '. . . I feel confident that next year will see the inclusion in the Government measure of an amendment which will enfranchise millions of women.'

Just two days earlier, Mr. Asquith had been saying his say to an anti-Suffragist deputation led not by a woman but a man, Lord Curzon, who officiated instead of Lord Cromer. 'We know,' Lord Curzon said, 'that the Cabinet is divided on this matter, but we also know to our satisfaction that in you we have a sympathizer and a friend.'

Mr. Asquith, while reaffirming his *minority* position in the Cabinet on this issue, expressed agreement with the views of the deputation. 'The grant of the franchise to the women in this country would,' he thought, 'be a political mistake of a very disastrous kind.' Mr. Asquith further said that if the anti-Suffragists would pursue 'effective militant operations of a constitutional kind', he entertained very strong hopes that 'some of the jubilations heard from the supporters of woman suffrage would prove to have been "premature".'

Our impression of these various ministerial utterances were unfavourable. Both Mr. Lloyd George and Sir Edward Grey had said

that their loyalty to the Prime Minister precluded them from insisting that woman suffrage be made from the outset an integral part of the Reform Bill. Sir Edward Grey had argued that the Cabinet would break up if he and other Suffragist Ministers were to press the point, and that, he declared, would be 'a disaster to the Suffrage cause'. We replied: 'Once woman suffrage has been the cause of a Cabinet split, it will not be far from triumph.'

Another statement of Sir Edward Grey which we contested was that 'it was a great mistake to make the Government the objective of your efforts'. 'Since when,' we asked, 'had the Government ceased to be responsible for the manner in which the country is governed?'

As Mr. Lloyd George was leaving the above-mentioned meeting, a member of the Men's Political Union threw an attaché-case through the window of the car. On being arrested he said that what he did was done on his own initiative entirely independent of everybody. He had merely meant to break the window of the car to protest against the Government's dealing with the woman suffrage cause and its advocates. Mr. Lloyd George appeared at Bow Street as a witness in the case. He said that he had been bruised on the left cheek and accepted the statement of the accused that the act was unpremeditated—which admittedly was borne out by the method adopted—and a sentence of two months' imprisonment was imposed. Men are more inclined, as history shows, to attack their opponents, and it was harder for them than it was for the Suffragettes themselves to observe our rule of not using force against persons, as distinct from things. It was hardly to be wondered at if men who had seen Cabinet Ministers using force against women in the form of violent ejections from meetings, and forcible feeding in prison, should answer this force by force. But for Mother's restraining influence, men champions of the women's cause would assuredly have taken to far more drastic measures.

Coronation Year 1911, which had begun with such bright hope of women's victory, had seen that hope destroyed. Our loyalty to the Throne which had made us keep the truce to militancy had been despised and exploited by the Government. The pledge regarding the Conciliation Bill, whereby the Government had bought peace at Coronation time, had, to reverse the Prime Minister's promise, 'been broken in the letter and in the spirit'. The Conciliation Bill had been admittedly 'torpedoed'.

The year that opened in sunshine ended in storm.

1912—Women's War

*Mr. Hobhouse's Incitement—Wholesale Glass-breaking—
Escape—Control from Paris*

I CANNOT start the New Year without putting my name down for the next protest against the policy of the Government.' 'I fully realize that the only way to get the vote is to fight for it.' 'Please enter my name for the next protest. I should like to help to hasten the day when we shall have votes for women.'

Messages such as these came thick and fast to the W.S.P.U. headquarters as 1912 began. Rumours appeared in the Press that it would be 'impossible' for pro-Suffragist and anti-Suffragist Ministers of the Government to oppose one another on the public platform by speaking, some for and others against votes for women, although the pro-Suffrage Ministers had undertaken to campaign in favour of the women's amendment.

Women noticed in the New Year a strange silence as to votes for women on the part of their 'friends in the Cabinet'. Mr. Lloyd George at Cardiff, Lord Haldane at Nottingham, Lord Grey at Sunderland, Mr. Runciman at Newcastle, said not one word of the cause they had promised to advocate in order to assure its inclusion in the Reform Bill. If the Suffragettes had not been present to heckle them, they would not even have mentioned votes for women.

Mother had now returned from her tour in Canada and the United States, where she had travelled 10,000 miles and spoken in many different places. At a welcome meeting in London she applauded the protest we had made in her absence against the Government's 'gross breach of their pledge regarding the Conciliation Bill'. She announced that she would again lead a protest against this policy.

An ominous hint was now given in the political notes in *The Times* that the Government's Reform Bill might, as drafted and introduced, be impossible of amendment to include woman suffrage. However, in

a reply, presumably inspired by the Government, it was said that 'No serious notice is taken of the suggestion that a Woman Suffrage Amendment would be out of order in the Reform Bill. This difficulty has been present in the minds of the Cabinet throughout and is not regarded as unsurmountable. In both preamble and clauses the Measure will be framed to allow of such an amendment. Woman Suffrage amendments were moved and voted on in the Reform Bills of 1867 and 1884.'

That was true. Indeed the Woman Suffrage Amendment of 1884 would have been carried but for the opposition of the Liberal Prime Minister of that day, for then, as in 1912, there was a House of Commons majority pledged to vote for woman suffrage.

It will be noted, then, that in 1912 the Government were forewarned of the need of taking especial care in the drafting of the Manhood Suffrage Bill, if the alleged 'opportunity' for women were to have the faintest shadow of reality.

The Cabinet, as a whole, said no more as to their Suffrage policy. When Mr. Lloyd George came to speak at the City Liberal Club, a gentleman seated at the reporters' table said that 'When the Chancellor of the Exchequer speaks, we should like to hear something in reference to the Cabinet and women's enfranchisement.' Mr. Lloyd George denied that there was any split in the Cabinet or any feud between the Prime Minister and himself on votes for women. At the close of the proceedings the same inquirer asked for a 'few words about the Suffrage question', but not a word more said Mr. Lloyd George.

We now awaited the Autumn Session and the King's Speech. 'Unless in the King's Speech a Government measure to give votes to women is promised, Mrs. Pankhurst will place herself at the head of a great demonstration of protest to take place two weeks after the opening of Parliament,' wrote Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, and she added: 'Let the Union as one woman rise and go with her.'

We pointed out that if, as Mr. Lloyd George had said, there was no Suffrage split in the Cabinet, one section must have yielded to the other. Which side had yielded? Had Mr. Lloyd George and Sir Edward Grey surrendered their principles or the anti-Suffragists their prejudices?

A grave incitement to militancy was now delivered by a Cabinet Minister, Mr. Hobhouse, at a speech in Bristol, the scene of the great

franchise riots prior to the Reform Act of 1832. He declared that in the case of votes for women there had not been the kind of popular sentimental uprising which accounted for the burning of Nottingham Castle in 1832 or the tearing up of the Hyde Park railings in 1867. In fact, there had been 'no ebullition of popular feeling'.

This sensational challenge to women by a responsible Minister of the Crown had a decisive effect on the future course of the woman suffrage movement.

Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, untiring in 'Votes for Women', pointed out that the popular sentimental uprising to which Mr. Hobhouse had referred was 'the burning of the castle of the anti-Suffrage Duke of Newcastle. Colurich, the seat of another anti-Suffrage gentleman in the neighbourhood, was set on fire and his wife died of illness caused by the shock.' No arrests were made in connection with these crimes.

After this the King besought the Whig Ministry favourable to the Reform Bill not to resign and 'it was intimated that the Peers who had thrown out the Bill would no longer oppose it'. The Lord Chancellor, the Lord Brougham, leader of the Reform Party in the House of Lords, criticized the violent acts in question but 'hastened to add' that the Reform Bill would be reintroduced and 'in a very short period become part and parcel of the law of the land'. These emphatic words, Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence recalled, 'produced their effect. The militant agitation calmed down.' She quoted the sequel from Mrs. Molesworth's *History of England*: 'The anti-Reformers, who had been terrified at the first violence which had followed the rejection of the Reform Bill . . . finding that the people bore their disappointment with patience and calmness, began to take heart and to assert that a reaction had commenced and that the people were sick of Reform.'

'Then it was,' said Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, 'that the city of Bristol, which now counts Mr. Hobhouse as one of its representatives, became the theatre of an outburst which filled the Kingdom with consternation. In the Art Gallery today can be seen pictures of the riots and one picture in particular shows Queen's Square in flames and bears at the foot the following inscription: "On Sunday, October 30th, 1831, between the hours of 6 o'clock and 12 o'clock, the new Gaol, the Toll House, Bishop's Palace, two sides of Queen's Square, including the Mansion House, Custom House, Excise Office, warehouses and other property to the amount of upwards of £100,000 was totally destroyed."

'So fully,' said Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, 'did the Government, the Peers and the King understand the argument of arson and destruction, that the Reform Bill became law a few months afterwards, namely in June 1832.'

By holding up to women the example of men's methods of winning the vote, Mr. Hobhouse was taking the very grave responsibility of inciting them, said Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, 'to serious forms of violence, compared to which Mrs. Pankhurst's exhortation is mildness itself'.

Mother's milder exhortation to militancy had been made at a gathering of welcome to Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence and other prisoners, on their release from Holloway Gaol.

'It is perhaps one of the strangest things of our civilization,' Mother said, 'that women in the twentieth century find the appeal to justice and to reason of less political value than the breaking of panes of glass. Yet there is no doubt that is true. We honour these women because, having learnt the value of the broken window in politics, they nerved themselves to use it. "Deeds not Words" is the motto of this movement and we are going to prove our love and gratitude to our released prisoners by continuing the use of the stone as an argument in the further protests we have to make. Is not a woman's life, her health, more valuable than panes of glass?'

Volunteers enlisted in greater numbers than ever before.

Mrs. Pankhurst issued a handbill to men and women. 'I invite you to come to Parliament Square, Monday, March 4th, 1912, at 8 o'clock, to take part in a great Protest Meeting against the Government's refusal to include women in their Reform Bill.'

A crisis now arose for the W.S.P.U. and the women's movement. Parliamentary questions, which may or may not have had some official inspiration, were asked regarding Mrs. Pankhurst's speech on the forthcoming demonstration. The Home Secretary, Mr. McKenna, said that his attention had been drawn to this 'inflammatory speech', as he called it, but 'it would not be desirable in the public interest to say more than this at present'.

The Home Secretary was also asked whether he had noticed the inflammatory speech of his colleague Mr. Hobhouse, objecting that there was not behind woman suffrage the sentimental and popular

uprising which accounted for the burning of Nottingham Castle. Was not that statement an incitement to women to go and do likewise? Mr. McKenna would not accept this invitation to 'criticize the speech of my colleague'.

Evidently the Government were preparing some big blow to put an end to militancy.

In a letter to Mr. Asquith, Mrs. Pankhurst called for further explanation of the Government's intentions and sought an interview for the discussion of matters which had arisen since the previous autumn. She received the usual negative reply. She then made her protest, in company with many other volunteers, the protest being spread over two days.

A band of women [reported the *Daily Telegraph*] set out on such a window-breaking campaign in the principal streets of the West End, as London has never known. For a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes, nothing was heard in the Strand, Cockspur Street, Downing Street, Whitehall, Piccadilly, Bow Street or Oxford Street, but the falling, shattered glass. . . . Many of the finest shop fronts in the world had been temporarily destroyed and splinters of glass had been scattered over their valuable contents. The attack was begun practically simultaneously. It was one of the busiest periods of the day. Suddenly women, who a moment before had appeared to be on peaceful shopping expeditions, produced from bags or muffs, hammers, stones, and sticks and began an attack on the nearest windows. Information was immediately conveyed to the police and all the reserve constables were hurried out.

The most daring incident of the day, was the excursion of Mrs. Pankhurst and two other ladies to Downing Street. The police patrols in the street were taken completely by surprise. A large force of extra police immediately proceeded to Downing Street. In spite of the efforts of the constables however, four other women escaped their vigilance and succeeded in inflicting further damage before they were arrested.

Mother, who had driven in a cab to the Prime Minister's residence, was arrested with her two companions, Mrs. Tuke and Mrs. Arthur Marshall.

In the dock next morning Mother said to the magistrate: 'The last time I was here I laid before you certain reasons for my action with which I do not propose to trouble you this morning. At that time I

hoped that what we were doing would be sufficient. Since then the Government have left me and other women no possible doubt as to our position. We have not the vote, because, hitherto, we have not been able to bring ourselves to use the methods which won the vote for men, and within the last fortnight a member of the Government has challenged us to do very much more serious things than we are now charged before you with doing. Over a week ago, I wrote to the Prime Minister asking him to see a deputation of women. The request was refused with contempt. Yet Cabinet Ministers have gone, cap in hand, to the Miners' Federation. [A miners' strike was then in progress.] I hope that this will be enough to convince the Government that our agitation is going on. If not, if you send me to prison, as soon as I come out I shall go further and show that women must have some voice in the making of the laws which they have to obey.' Mother was sentenced to two months' imprisonment.

One hundred and twenty other women had now been arrested and on the following Monday, when the protest was renewed, their number was greatly increased, and included the veteran Mrs. Saul Solomon, Dr. (Dame) Ethel Smyth, Mrs. Brackenbury and her two daughters, Mrs. Ayrton Gould and Miss Downing the sculptor.

The Government now dealt us their great blow. It was to arrest those who were directing the policy, controlling the organization and editing the paper *Votes for Women*. Already hints and rumours had been afloat that the leaders would be arrested and sent to prison for a long term of years. The hope was, perhaps, that this threat would produce surrender. But the vote was worth the price of years of imprisonment and if the Government imprisoned the leaders others would carry on the fight.

The Government acted. Mother and Mrs. Tuke were already in prison under sentence of two months' imprisonment. A warrant was issued for the arrest of Mr. and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence and myself. All five were charged with conspiring, on and since the 1st day of November 1911, to commit damage and injury to property of 'liege subjects of our Lord and King' and aiding and abetting, counselling and procuring the commission of offences against the provision of Section 5 of an Act of 1861 dealing with injuries to property.

Armed with the warrant, the police raided the W.S.P.U. office in the evening when members of the general public would not be about, but when officials and staff were still to be found at work. They

displayed the warrant, made the arrest, but of the Pethick Lawrences only. I was not there and knew nothing of what was happening. In the new flat which I had lately taken, I was writing an editorial for *Votes for Women*, headed 'The Challenge'.

A knock at the door! I opened it. One of our members¹ entered. She had come from Clement's Inn and gave me the news. Would I sign the cheque which Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence had already signed, enabling the transfer of W.S.P.U. funds before they could be attached by any order of the Court? Would I give her the article I had been writing, for the printer? Was the arresting over, I asked, or should I be in time if I went to Clement's Inn, to be arrested there? No, she said, the police would have left with their prisoners. I decided to wait where I was.

In the challenge of the moment a flash of light came to me and showed me the position to be more dangerous than I had foreseen. Theoretically, the prolonged isolation of the leaders would be counteracted by the devotion of our membership. But in *practice* fatal dangers would arise, especially as the same *coup* could and would be repeated over and over again. We had a resolute foe to contend with. The Government's purpose was to hold the shepherds captive, while they did their utmost to scatter and suppress the flock. They were resolved to stamp out the movement. I foresaw, as the result of this, or some future move, the shepherds sentenced to years of imprisonment and quietly kept out of action or else, if by the hunger-strike they resisted imprisonment, reduced to illness and inability for effectual leadership. If others replacing us gave as strong a lead, they would be dealt with in the same way. I foresaw an even greater danger—the infiltration of our movement by new elements prompted by our opponents, who would put peace, or party politics, or both, before justice and votes for women. Stirred by these forebodings, I said to my visitor, almost as one would write and sign a last will and testament: 'It must be shown by militancy, and still greater militancy, that the arrest of leaders has not checked the movement and its methods, but has had the opposite effect.' She departed.

I was alone facing a great problem, a crisis for the movement. Those who had shared the responsibility were prisoners. What best

¹ This member was Miss Evelyn Sharp the novelist, whom I had sent to warn Christabel and who had also undertaken to edit *Votes for Women* during the detention of my wife and myself.—Ed.

use could I make of the few remaining minutes of freedom to guard against the evident dangers? At any moment the police would come.

I barricaded the locked door. I would make a fight anyhow. A bell rang from the outer door. The building was locked by this time and the housekeeper, who lived next to my top-floor flat, went slowly downstairs to open. I waited. Ascending feet were heard. A knock! 'Who's there?' I said. A woman's voice: 'Mrs. —.' One of our members! I opened. 'A note from Jessie Kenney,' she said. Jessie, too, had sent me warning of what had happened. My chance had come. I would get away for the night, if I could, and gain time to think what could be done before going to trial and prison. 'Have you a cab at the door?' I asked. 'Yes.' 'Then take me with you.' We tiptoed downstairs to the door. Were the police there? Not one to be seen. We drove away. My companion lived in Whitehall Court. 'I mustn't take you there,' she said, 'you will be recognized.' 'Drive me to Victoria Station!' I said. I entered the station, lingered a little, went out again, hailed a cab and drove to the nursing home at Pembridge Villas, kept by Miss Townend and Miss Pine, remembering that they had jestingly said one day when their new lift had been placed in a recess in the hall: 'We could hide you here.' It was late by then. A night nurse admitted me. I told my two friends that I needed a night's security to reflect and plan. 'You can't stay here because there is an operation due at midnight; you might be seen,' said they. An inspiration came to them. They dressed me as a nurse! So dressed I went with one of them to the home of friends of hers, sympathizers, who lived in a flat not far away. They welcomed me. I had found a haven. Not long after I left the nursing home, where my too-well-known hat had just been reduced to ashes in the drawing-room fire, the police arrived to search for me! They made further search that night, but not yet desperately, for they doubtless thought that I meant to vary the programme by making some dramatic entry on the scene of trial.

I did not sleep at all that night for thinking. Suddenly, in the small hours, I saw what I must do! Escape! The Government should not defeat us. They should not break our movement. It must be preserved and the policy kept alive until the vote was won. My law studies had not been in vain. They had impressed indelibly upon my mind the fact that a political offender is not liable to extradition. Long before,

when actually a prisoner in Holloway, that thought had come to me, in my prison cell, as a matter of purely academic interest. 'Of course if one ever did wish to avoid imprisonment, one could escape to a foreign country and as a political offender be able to stay there.' Not an academic matter now, but one of vital, practical, political concern! I must get to Paris, control the movement from there—and from there keep the fight going, until we won! I could hardly wait for the morning! As soon as I could venture to rouse my kind hostesses I told them my purpose. Would they see Miss —— and ask if she could arrange for me to drive in her car to the boat instead of travelling by train? One of them went to inquire. It was impossible, she learned, for reasons of possible recognition, but she returned with money for my needs. This was helpful indeed, for approach to my own bank might be imprudent. I must risk taking the train, and risk it was, for a Suffragette speaker was known by sight to thousands, and the morning newspapers gave the news that I was 'wanted by the police'. One of these friends said she would go with me to Paris. I borrowed a black coat and a black cloche hat. My face was sufficiently disguised by an unaccustomed pallor. We drove to Victoria Station. The boat train was crowded, for the coal strike had reduced the service. I bought fashion papers, as providing a non-political screen, and sat quietly in a corner. The train started. Safety so far! Opposite me sat a lady writing letter after letter, but not too busy, it seemed, to look at me intently every now and again. The train reached Folkestone town and stopped. The lady opposite crossed the compartment, put her head out of the window and called: 'Policeman!' My heart stood still. She gave him her letters to post! The train moved on to the boat station. I went aboard. 'Don't come any further with me,' I said to my kind companion. 'Take this letter back with you and see that Annie Kenney gets it.' She left me. The boat started . . . arrived! My foot touched the soil of France. We were saved. We would win.

London was all astir. The broken windows drew thousands of sightseers. One Cabinet Minister, at least, made some inspection of the wreckage, for Lord Riddell reports: 'Lloyd George and I went to look at the Prime Minister's windows, which had been broken the night before. We both thought it a strange sight.' Strange indeed! Most strange that in a free country, under a Liberal Government,

women should be driven to such action by the neglect of all their peaceful pleading for justice. Most natural from another point of view, for what was good enough for Wellington's windows in 1832 was good enough for Mr. Asquith's windows in 1912.

A meeting of West End tradesmen was convened to protest against the window-breaking, but a great number of influential women wrote to the Chairman and Committee to say: 'The demand for the Vote is the root of the trouble! Why should not the Government do at once what they will be compelled to do in the end, after great expenditure of time and money? Should you not urge them to redress the grievance which lies at the root of the discontent?' The signatories of this stateswomanly letter included Viscountess Acheson, the Hon. Mrs. Guy Baring, Lady Betty Balfour, Viscountess Cowdray, Lady de Clifford, Viscountess Dupplin, Mrs. Stanley Mappin, Miss Eva Moore, Miss Lillah McCarthy, Mrs. Ronald McNeill, Lady Maud Parry, Lady Isabel Stewart, Lady Willoughby de Broke, and Viscountess Wolmer.

The shops calmed down wonderfully in the end, and even continued to advertise in our paper. Indeed, Mrs. Marshall, who was our honorary canvasser for advertisements, would have it that those whose windows were not broken were a little piqued at being so neglected! When, later on, the insurance companies fastened financial responsibility upon Mr. and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, one famous firm in Regent Street advertised in our paper that they had not wished this course to be taken but were helpless to prevent it as the insurance people had the matter in hand.

The Conspiracy Trial was a very serious question. The police had made a vast haul of papers at Clement's Inn and took some time to sift them. Lengthy proceedings in the Police Court followed. The prosecution alleged 'one continuous conspiracy' and 'one continuous incitement' to damage property. Worse could have been said about Sir Edward Carson, for he was conspiring and inciting to attack, not only on property, but on life. True, the attacks he had in view were *conditional* upon a future Ulster grievance. But our 'conspiracy and incitement' were also conditional upon the continued non-removal of a present women's grievance. This 'highly developed and extensive organization', our W.S.P.U., was anatomized by the prosecution in a manner that was at times unintentionally comic, as when the magistrate was informed that 'public men in the service are tabulated here

under code names'. One Cabinet Minister was coded as 'Thistle', another as 'Roses', and so forth. There should be a reason for this. Telegrams must go out, and the meeting at which 'the particular tree or plant would be present would be interrupted, and the speaker harassed by members of the Union'.

There followed the reading of numerous extracts from the speeches and letters of Mother and the rest of us, all very much to the point and most educational as to the motive of our militancy. Witnesses were called and in cross-examination it was drawn from them that our arguments for militancy had been based upon the demand for the vote, upon Cabinet Ministers' breaking faith, and the incitement uttered by some of them to emulate the greater violence of men in their struggle for enfranchisement. During the long proceedings in the Police Court, which lasted about three weeks, all the accused were kept in prison, Mother and Mrs. Tuke being ordinary prisoners under sentence, and Mr. and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence being refused bail.

All this time I was writing the editorials in *Votes for Women* and not forgetting to quote the words of Gladstone, Joseph Chamberlain, and others in support of militant means of winning the vote, or the words of Mr. Hobhouse in regard to Nottingham Castle which were, I maintained, 'the most calculated and wicked incitement to violence that any responsible public man, and more especially a Minister of the Crown, has ever uttered'.

At last after their committal for trial for conspiracy, Mr. and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence were released on bail, and the Home Secretary agreed that Mother's sentence on the smaller count should be remitted. Mrs. Tuke was acquitted and was in time to receive an ovation at the Albert Hall meeting which we had arranged to rally the forces and to prove, as it royally did, that the Government's latest blow had failed.

The already 'torpedoed' Conciliation Bill came spectrally before the House of Commons about this time. The Government's destructive tactics had done their work and the second reading was defeated, though only by a very small majority. This showed how easily private members' pledges were broken at the behest of their leaders. One Liberal Minister boasted that he turned his coat and voted against the Conciliation Bill as a mark of his admiration for and support of Mr. Asquith! We should have taken the incident more to heart had

we not known that the Government would again have wrecked the Bill, even if it had passed its second reading. The House of Commons knew that, too, and this knowledge largely accounted for the result of the second reading division.

Meantime, Ulster's threats of militancy rose higher. Mr. Bonar Law approved them. 'Though the brunt of the battle will be yours,' he said, 'you will not be wanting help from across the Channel.' 'If the Government treat us with fraud, we will reply with force,' said Sir Edward Carson. Those were our sentiments too. The Government had treated us with fraud and we had replied with a little force, whereas Sir Edward Carson and his friends were preparing to meet fraud by a great deal of force.

Mr. Walter Long declared that 'Civil war may be necessary. It may be forced on the people in order to protect the rights and liberties of themselves and their successors.' 'If the Government,' he continued, 'were going to put Lord Londonderry and Sir Edward Carson in the dock, they will have to find one big enough to hold the whole Unionist Party.' Lord Selborne did not think that men of our race were willing to 'part with their liberty without fighting for it, with rifles in their hands if need be'. The Suffragettes, after years of provocation and political injustice, were fighting for liberty, not with rifles, but with mere stones, and they were aiming not at human beings but only at window-panes.

The big trial at the Central Criminal Court was approaching, and a farewell reception for Mother and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence was arranged. Mother's final words to the members were these:

'While we are in prison, you, I know, will stand by the cause. You will be loyal to it and loyal to us. Do not listen, when it comes to political action, to anyone outside, even to friends of the movement, however sincere, but only to those whom you have chosen as your leaders. There will be people who will tell you that it will be easier for us if you make concessions. If there is one thing that could break our hearts, it would be the thought that your affection for us should be used to weaken your determination to go on with our movement. We face this trial with good heart, because whatever the result, it will be a step forward.'

The trial was deferred longer than Mother thought, because her great efforts in peaceful propaganda, her prison experience, the strain of the long Police Court proceedings, the critical position of our

movement had been too much for her health, and application had to be made for a postponement of the trial.

This is, therefore, a good opportunity to describe what followed my escape to Paris. Installed incognito in a small hotel near the Arc de Triomphe, I awaited the first messenger from London. The English newspapers on sale in Paris told me that a great police search for me was in progress, a search that continued for a long time and was not without its amusing features. The British Isles were ransacked. 'Where is Christabel?' was the constant question. The Home Secretary, when asked in Parliament why the police did not find and arrest me, attributed this failure to the 'fanatical loyalty' of the Suffragettes. The great Government conspiracy against the Suffragettes was in fact 'torpedoed' by the escape of one of the 'conspirators'. Yet I was not elated. I knew too well the gravity of the position. Mother and her three co-defendants would probably, I thought, receive a relatively short sentence after all, in view of the failure of the Government's *coup*. But I knew also that a new phase of the struggle had definitely opened, and that *next time* the Government would leave nothing to chance. I knew, too, that so long as Mother and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence were in the hands of the Government there would be a hard fight for me to wage, by long-distance control, with that Government of astute politicians and skilful lawyers—a real battle of wits and will, a woman's wit and will against theirs.

Longing for news, I walked for miles about Paris, thinking over the position and laying plans of action.

At last Annie came, having travelled by circuitous route in careful disguise. As once Goschen was forgotten, so the Government in making their *coup* had forgotten Annie. A few years earlier they would not have forgotten her, for she was then in London, and much in the eye of the public. But latterly, by the greatest good fortune as it now turned out, she had been organizing in the West of England and even our London members, many of whom had joined during her absence from the centre, did not realize, or had forgotten, how vital a figure Annie Kenney had been. I knew from experience that Annie was the person to hold the fort at headquarters. She had no personal ties that would impose upon her a divided duty. Moreover, she had earned by her own record and service as a militant pioneer the honour of being first in command at Clement's Inn. I had written her a letter which installed her in that post of responsibility, honour, and danger,



Miss Wallace Dunlop
'Charlie' (Charlotte) Marsh

George Lansbury, 1912
Lady Constance Lytton



Helen Craggs—now Lady Pethick-Lawrence
 Mrs. Mansel
 (*Below*) Emily Wilding Davison
 Jessie Kenney as a messenger boy

in case my attempt to escape should fail. No committee could have coped with the situation we had to face, and besides, the selection of a committee would have been invidious. My first fellow prisoner was the only possible choice. As it happened, my attempt to escape had not failed, and my own control of the movement could be sustained. Yet to make this long-distance control effectual, I still needed her as my chief agent in London.

She arrived, then, full of news from the scene of action. All she told me proved the value of my escape and verified that first flash of insight.

We then and there planned the whole system of control from Paris, which worked so effectually from that day until the outbreak of the world war. True, things were not the same as before the Government-raid and arrest of leaders. The time of flags, bands, mild symbolic militancy, short prison sentences, gala days of welcome, more or less carefree 'at homes', was ended. The Government had resolved to crush the movement, to end not only window-breaking, but also deputations to the Prime Minister and other Ministers, and 'interrupted speeches and spoilt perorations'! Repression had been the Government's policy for the first six years, and now their policy was repression intensified, combined with a new and subtle attempt to confuse and confound, divide and disintegrate, the movement.

It was my business, as it is the business of a strategist in every form of conflict, to read the enemy's mind, and I was fortunately able to read the mind and discern the purpose of the Government in general and in particular of Mr. Lloyd George, who had evidently assumed a major part in carrying it out.

Mother had called attention to the more subtle aspect of the Government's new plan of campaign. She saw that while I was in command in Paris, only an uncompromising unity between the members and myself could bring the good ship W.S.P.U. and its precious cargo safely home.

It was not easy and not altogether wise to explain openly that a new chapter had opened. Trust in the leadership that had started the militant movement had roused the women, stirred the men, and made the world ring; this trust was not only a matter of duty; it was sheer common sense. Mother had a right, as she faced prison, perhaps for years, to say to the women of her movement: 'Trust Christabel and listen only to her, and those she has put in command under her at

Clement's Inn.' Mother had also a right later, in 1914, when she set aside, for the duration of the war, the militancy which she and I had initiated, to claim confidence that we were thereby doing what was best for women, as well for the country. Mother and I had pledged and promised that we would get women their vote and we did.

1912—Continued

*The State Trial—The Reform Bill—Militancy in Dublin—
Penal Servitude—Parting with the Pethick-Lawrences*

Now came the State trial, as it was called by counsel for the defence. Strangely enough, the judge was Lord Coleridge, son of the man who years before, when Mother was a small child, had, with my father, pleaded women's right, as 'persons', to vote under the Franchise Act of 1867.

Sir Rufus Isaacs (later Lord Reading), the Attorney-General, personally conducted the prosecution. The accused had, he said, 'become annoyed with Mr. Asquith because he would not make Woman Suffrage what was called a Government measure'. The Government had, instead, announced the introduction of a Manhood Suffrage Bill. Sir Rufus Isaacs did not explain that the Government had broken their pledge to women in connection with this Manhood Suffrage Bill. From that time, he continued, the defendants had worked to carry out a campaign which would have meant 'nothing less than anarchy'. Women were to be induced to act together at a given time in a given place in such numbers that the Government would, 'to use the defendant's own words, be "brought to its knees"'. He referred to the 'inflammatory speeches' made by the present defendants, and by her who was absent, neglecting, of course, to mention the inflammatory speeches made by himself and his Liberal colleagues on the subject of *force majeure* as the only means whereby the voteless have obtained the vote!

Addressing the jury, Sir Rufus said: 'You will notice that there are four persons charged and there are only three persons in the dock. Miss Christabel Pankhurst, also charged in this indictment, has not surrendered, but although she is not present on her trial before you, she is a very prominent person in this conspiracy and about her you will have to hear much. Let me say at the outset that whatever your

individual views may be upon the political issue, which I am afraid will be referred to many times, I am anxious to impress upon you, from the moment we begin to deal with the facts of the case, that all questions as to whether a woman is entitled to the Parliamentary franchise are in no way involved in the trial.' The 'ringleaders', so he politely called us, were then accused of conspiracy. 'Every person is free—quite free,' he assured the jury, 'to express any opinion, publicly by writing, by word of mouth, at meetings' and so on. But he omitted to explain that the Government to which he belonged, far from responding to these peaceable and law-abiding expressions of woman's will to vote, studiously, indeed scornfully, ignored them and so left open no other way of winning the vote but that taken by men in days gone by.

Tongue in cheek, surely, Sir Rufus Isaacs went on to outline the militant words and deeds of the W.S.P.U., so mild, as he well knew them to be, in comparison with the incitement provided by his own and other Ministerial utterances and in comparison with men's own deeds. The secret codes dilated upon in the Police Court were again brought forward. It may be said here that these were never used. They had been merely suggested by an ingenious member. However, the prosecution made great play with 'Fox=are you prepared for arrest', 'Goose=don't get arrested', and 'Duck=don't get arrested unless success depends upon it'. This was all fairy-tale.

A letter from Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence was then read. She had written: 'We have come to a very grave crisis. The Government now propose to exploit our long national struggle for political freedom in order to give more votes to men. Hundreds of women have volunteered for such action as may be necessary as a protest.' And again from one of Mrs. Lawrence's speeches: 'We have only to be militant enough, and twenty-four hours will see us victorious.' He quoted Mother's words: 'Since we cannot win our freedom by women's ways, then we must nerve ourselves to do what men did and I am going to throw my stone with the rest.'

Innumerable extracts from our speeches he read, really indicting and convicting the Liberal Government, and himself as a member of it. Nothing could have been better for the cause than this long chain of evidence. No word, no act charged against us even approached in gravity the words of challenge addressed to us by Mr. Hobhouse and the acts held up to us as an example of what would effectually express

a demand for the vote. In the cross-examination of witnesses the defendants elicited many interesting admissions and caused whole speeches and articles to be read in full. What a pity there was no broadcasting in those days! That trial, had it been generally heard, would have impressed the whole country and roused the public to still greater sympathy with the Suffragettes.

Mr. Tim Healy, K.C., who defended Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, scored a great point when in the cross-examination of one witness he read 'the days are past for rioting and we do not need to have recourse to bloodshed or violence to carry out our schemes of progress and reform, because we have a fairly good franchise which is an assurance that the will of the——' 'What are you quoting?' interrupted the prosecution. 'Wait and see!' replied Mr. Healy, and continued: 'that the will of the people must prevail. Formerly, when the great mass of the people were voteless they had to do something violent to show what they felt; today, the elector's bullet is his ballot.' This evident incitement to Suffragette violence was spoken, Mr. Healy explained, by Sir Rufus Isaacs himself! The whole prosecution reeked, indeed, with inconsistency, insincerity and injustice, and long as the trial lasted, it did not last long enough to bring out all the incitement to militancy provided by Liberal leaders, Mr. Gladstone and John Bright in the past, and the Asquiths, Hobhouses, Isaacs, Greys and Lloyd Georges of 1905 to 1912.

The speeches for the defence were a masterly moral arraignment of the Government and vindication of the accused. 'I am not part of this organization, being a man,' said Mr. Pethick-Lawrence, 'but I intended and I still intend to stand by the women who are fighting in this agitation and using methods which I know have succeeded in history. The breaking of windows is repugnant to me, but the women who have taken this course have been driven by the logic of facts to do what they did, and I for one am not going to condemn their action. Long before any stone-throwing occurred, women were arrested while going on a peaceful deputation to the House of Commons.' Knowing what methods had succeeded in history, he was not going to say that the women's methods were a mistake.

Mrs. Pankhurst said that the word conspiracy was a word suggesting to the non-legal mind something of secrecy, shame, and intrigue. But the jury knew from the evidence that the defendants in this case were far from being conspirators in that sense of the word. Militant

their organization was called, but mainly, she had been proud to think, because we had chosen as our motto 'Deeds not Words'. She showed how denial of justice and acts of coercion of increasing stringency had been the Government's invariable reply at every stage since the militant movement began; showed, in fact, that militant was a word applying more truly to the Government's action than to ours. The conspiracy, if any, was the Government's conspiracy to imprison the leaders and in their absence break down our organization. As for incitement, if the defendants in this case were guilty thereof, then members of His Majesty's Government should be in the dock also. 'But I do not ask you to say that you will not convict us until they are by our side, though I do suggest that members of His Majesty's Government and Opposition have used language at least as inflammatory as ours.'

A political duel, not a trial, was this, declared Mr. Tim Healy. The law had been vindicated, property had been protected, he insisted, by sentences of two, four, and six months' imprisonment meted out to those who had actually broken the window-panes, and were even then in gaol. 'The Attorney-General has been despatched here for the odious task of trying to prevent any further inconvenience to the sacred persons of the present Government,' he said. 'Gentlemen of the jury, in the past, when mild and reckless speeches were delivered against the officers of the majesty of the Government, the prisoners were arraigned for sedition. We have not been arraigned for sedition; we have been pinioned as conspirators. What is the chief ingredient in our conspiracy? We must confess that since the present Government took office, no single Cabinet Minister has been allowed to address a public meeting without being inconvenienced with an inquiry as to why women should not have a vote. That is our offence.' It is no doubt a very useful thing, remarked Mr. Healy, when you have political opponents, to be able to set the law in motion against them. He doubted not that the Government would find it most convenient to shut up the whole of His Majesty's Opposition—all the Carsons, F. E. Smiths, Bonar Laws, and so on.

'Gentlemen of the jury,' he went on, 'whatever words have been spoken by mutual opponents, whatever instructions have been addressed, not to feeble females, but to men who boast of drilling and of arms, they have not prosecuted anybody except women, by means of an indictment. Yet the Government of my learned friend ask you

to pass judgment upon the prisoners at the Bar, and to say that without rhyme or reason, and without provocation, these responsible, well-bred, educated university people have suddenly, in the words of the indictment, wickedly and with malice aforethought engaged in these criminal designs.

‘Do you think,’ asked Mr. Healy, ‘that these ladies whose lives have been ransacked, whose papers have been examined by detectives, upon whose whole career the limelight of fierce inquiry has been turned, who have borne pain and prison with cheerfulness and equanimity, will give way now? Is it likely that conviction by you will end this movement, or that it will destroy the sense of wrong which burns in their hearts? I wish that all my learned friend’s colleagues could examine their conscience—as they have applied the searchlight to the case of the defendants—and say that their political actions have been as unselfish and self-sacrificing. I question if the incense of history will be as fragrant in the nostrils when their names are mentioned, as when the names of Emmeline Pankhurst, Christabel Pankhurst, and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence are brought up in future times.’

A moral acquittal was the result of the trial, for the jury, though giving a verdict of guilty, said: ‘We unanimously desire to express the hope that taking into consideration the undoubtedly pure motives that underlie the agitation that has led to this trouble you will be pleased to exercise the utmost clemency and leniency in dealing with the case.’

Clemency and lenience were not to be seen in the sentence of nine months’ imprisonment in the second division imposed by the judge.

A demand for first division treatment arose on every hand and among the precedents for this was cited the transference to the first division of the Jameson raiders. Protesting against the fact of imprisonment at all, we again argued that Ulstermen, by drilling in breach of the Unlawful Drilling Act, were rendering themselves liable to seven years’ penal servitude, which the Government carefully refrained from meting out to them.

It was not that we were concerned to question or assert the moral justification of Ulster’s militancy, actual or prospective, but we did claim the same immunity from prosecution and imprisonment for

militant women whose grievance was at least equal and whose militancy was far milder.

I was now in solitary command of the W.S.P.U. and its movement. For the moment the prison position of the leaders and of the large number of other prisoners was the dominant issue. Yet at the same time the fight must continue, and the political situation must be watched. Through our paper, *Votes for Women*, I could keep the trumpet sounding and messengers and letters passing to and fro between Paris and London enabled continuous control. The search for me continued, with all its humour for us and its exasperation for the foe. One of our members gave them a tantalizing experience. She, dressed in a coat and hat belonging to me, entered my flat and locked the door. A telephone message reached the police: 'There is someone in Miss Pankhurst's flat.' They thundered on the door and, as it did not open, walked along a narrow ledge giving access to one of the windows. The curtains were drawn, but the window was slightly open. Flinging it wide they entered. 'The game's up, Miss Pankhurst!' Dismay; it was not she! After that and many another false clue had been followed to extreme futility, the search was apparently given up as hopeless.

A magnificent Albert Hall meeting was held which proved, by its size and enthusiasm, that the Government's blow had utterly failed to break the movement. Mrs. Tuke was the chairman, and with Miss Elizabeth Robins, Mrs. Mansell-Moullin, Annie Kenney and Mr. Tim Healy, K.C., M.P., as the speakers, the meeting was a triumph. Before that the Government, after a first refusal, had transferred the imprisoned leaders to the first division, partly owing to their threat to hunger-strike and partly owing to the storm of outside protest.¹ Eighty-one women were still in prison, some for terms of six months, and first division treatment was at once claimed for them also, a claim supported by many M.P.s and other public men. The Government's denial of their claim moved Mother and Mr. and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence to resort to a sympathetic hunger-strike. The Government retaliated by forcible feeding.

This was actually carried out in the case of Mr. and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence. The doctors and wardresses came to Mother's cell armed with forcible-feeding apparatus. Forewarned by the cries of Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence who, in the next cell, had been taken unawares,

¹ A member of the jury had expressed the views of himself and his fellow jurymen on the subject.—Ed.

Mother received them with all her majestic indignation. They fell back and left her. Neither then nor at any time in her long and dreadful conflict with the Government was she forcibly fed. The Government could not induce any of their officers or agents to do it, and dared not, it may be, again order it to be done.

At the end of five days' hunger-strike, Mother was released. Mr. and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence were released later after a period of forcible feeding. So ended the great conspiracy trial and the Government's raid upon the militant movement.

I knew well, however, that the Government had recoiled for another attack. I saw clearly that next time they would profit by this first experience of failure to seize us all. I accordingly determined, with a determination as iron-strong as theirs, that I would never return to England until the vote was won.

This was not a 'Joan of Arc' role that I had chosen, and any laurels that might belong to the pioneer prisoner would certainly wither from my brow. But I could not depend on any of the others to stay abroad through thick and thin. Least of all could I depend upon Mother to do it! I knew her ardent spirit too well. I knew that if I were to return to England and she were to stay in Paris, and if I were to find myself in prison, as I certainly should, Mother would soon be back in London and we should meet in Holloway, both prisoners, and both disabled for command. Whatever my limitations, I knew that in two respects I was well equipped—in the capacity to control affairs from a distance and in the capacity to read the mind of particular Cabinet Ministers and of the Government in general.

For the moment, however, everything in outward appearance was clear on the war front. 'Why does not Christabel come back?' was being asked by one and another. 'There is no reason for her to stay away any longer. When is she coming?' But she was not coming back at all. In her hard-headed way she had resolved to stay exactly where she was!

Mother now came to Paris. It was just the change she needed. We could talk over everything and rejoice in our triumph over the Government's latest onslaught. Mother could relax; she revived her schoolday memories, explored Paris, looked at the shops. It was a happy interlude for both of us, in which, for a brief moment, we could prepare for the hard fight yet to come. The other 'conspirators' came to see us and, of course, Annie Kenney and Mrs. Tuke. As the summer advanced, I moved to Boulogne-sur-Mer. This meant an easier journey

for those who came to see me from London. It was not until September, on my return to Paris, that we announced that I was abroad.

Of course, the work went on day in, day out, and for me it was never a case of being off duty. But I could, at the same time, maintain behind the line a haven of rest for those who came from London, and I think it helped them to visit that Paris haven during the awful, though necessary, struggle that lasted from March 1912 to the outbreak of the war.

This letter, written from Paris to a W.S.P.U. member by Mrs. Tuke, preserves something of those Paris days:

. . . How astounded the world at large would be if it could see Mrs. Pankhurst here in Paris, with those who are closest to her and know her as she really is! For a breathing space she is content to relinquish the warrior role and to be what is quite as truly her real self, simply an ordinary member of society—taking a natural and vivid interest in purely feminine and purely human concerns. . . . Yesterday we were shopping at one of the big stores—a sale was in progress and the usual crowd of women were busy competing with one another in a battle of sharp wits and sharper elbows. Mrs. Pankhurst was delighted to find a *bargain* and promptly secured it—her enjoyment of the fray was quite infectious and she was thoroughly proud of the success which crowned her own share in it. . . . We have delicious hours of real fun when the dominant note is laughter and simple gaiety, when the fleeting joy is kissed and the last vestige of enjoyment extracted from the most trifling incident. These carefree interludes, sandwiched as she can snatch them between others of the most serious import, are as meat and drink to her and as vitally necessary—one sometimes fears that without them her steps might falter under the tremendous burden of responsibility she carries with so gallant a spirit. But she shares her beautiful and abiding simplicity of character with the truly great ones of all time; few realize this and that is why even friendly criticism of her is never just but always one-sided and inadequate.

The fact that I was continuously on guard rendered possible the announcement made after the release of the imprisoned leaders that they would be spending the remainder of the summer in rest, recuperation, and travel, and resume their efforts in October with a great meeting at the Albert Hall. Another announcement of interest was the transfer of our London headquarters to Lincoln's Inn House, in Kingsway. This large and imposing building was, unlike Clement's

Inn, in our sole occupation and wholly given up to the work of the W.S.P.U. This was a costly and ambitious venture, but it was advantageous in many practical ways to have such a stronghold. Further, it was a manifestation of our continuing and increasing power.

The Government's Reform Bill had now come before Parliament. It was the most reactionary measure that had disgraced any Government in the past hundred years, for, ignoring the somewhat better precedent which, thanks to John Stuart Mill, had been created by the use of the term 'persons' in the Reform Act of 1867, the Liberal Government's Reform Bill of 1912 purported to confer the franchise upon 'male persons'.

This introduction of the word 'male' into a twentieth-century franchise measure will show the post-war generation of young women what was the battle the Suffragettes had to fight! That the Cabinet majority of professed supporters of woman suffrage should have consented to the use of the word 'male' in a Franchise Bill is a sufficient proof of our political wisdom in opposing and criticizing those Ministers as we did! Apart from the insult of this wording, its practical effect was to interpose a double barrier between women and the vote. First, there was required an amendment to delete the word 'male' and leave the word 'persons' alone standing. And then, as women were not, according to judge-made law, 'persons' for purposes of the franchise, a second amendment must be carried, expressly conferring upon them the right to vote on terms which would be the subject of still further controversy and disputation. The use of the word 'male' was, in fact, a direct breach of the Government's pledge, for it meant that the Bill, as introduced, was not freely open to amendment, as they had promised, but had to be made open by the deletion of this word 'male'.

Less than ever could we regret the acts of protest for which we had been indicted in the 'conspiracy trial'!

The flagrant inconsistency of the Government's coercion of the Suffragettes and their leniency towards Ulster militants was now publicly adverted to by Sir Edward Carson. 'One class of prisoner,' he said, 'were sent to prison for inciting to violence and another class were forgiven when they had given exactly the same kind of incitement. That was due to the existence of a craven Government beneath contempt.'

After what happened in the House of Commons in the pronouncement of the policy of the Government in relation to Ulster, he

intended, when he went over there, to break every law that was possible. He was not a bit afraid of them, for a more wretched, miserable, time-serving lot never before sat in Parliament.

This was far more inflammatory than anything we had ever said or had been alleged to say in the Conspiracy Trial. 'How soon,' we wondered openly, 'will the Government issue a warrant for Sir Edward Carson's arrest!' The Government were showing no mercy to their women opponents in prison. Forcible feeding was still in progress. In one week several of our prisoners had to be released because of the illness to which hunger-strike, followed by forcible feeding, had reduced them. In the House of Commons protests were made by men of all parties against this veritable torture of women.

Cabinet Ministers were being brought to book by Suffragettes at every opportunity. The Prime Minister was accosted at a reception by an indignant and uninvited guest. 'We must have a Government Measure for Votes for Women. You will have no peace until we do. You have insulted and betrayed women and you must take the consequences.' Grasping the lapels of his coat with either hand the Suffragette gave him a good shaking. She was overpowered and ejected by men, apparently detectives, but she was able as she went to call out another protest on behalf of the women being forcibly fed. Some of the guests sympathized warmly with her. 'It must take great courage to do this.' One of them sent her home in his motor-car. The Prime Minister had other Suffragette encounters before the evening was over. Mr. Lloyd George counselled him, so Lord Riddell reports in his diary, to attend no more receptions!

Mr. Lloyd George himself, with Sir John Simon, had a Suffragist encounter when he spoke at Woodford. Women were barred out, but men were there to heckle these Liberal leaders. One of the hecklers had to be rescued by ambulance men and others required medical care. Even men could not safely mention votes for women in a Cabinet Minister's meeting.

The Home Secretary, when he accompanied the King and Queen to Wales, was challenged in their very presence. The Royal party were in a narrow path leading to Llandaff Cathedral when a young Suffragette challenged him as to his treatment of women and their cause. Later when Mr. Hobhouse and Mr. Birrell were awaiting the Royal train at Bristol, they were challenged by a Suffragette.

All the women imprisoned for stone-throwing were now free again after their cruel experience under forcible feeding.

The second reading of the Government's Reform Bill took place early in July, leaving the woman suffrage issue still untouched. We at once called attention to the 'remarkable silence' during the second reading debate of the Cabinet Ministers who professed to support votes for women. Those who spoke at all, Mr. John Burns, Mr. Montagu and Sir John Simon, said nothing at all about votes for women, except that Mr. Montagu most unhelpfully remarked that it seemed to him 'a mischievous thing that you should wait for all other franchise reforms until you get a Government agreed on woman suffrage'. Sir Edward Grey and Mr. Lloyd George said never a word! This was their promised support!

The Conservative leaders in the second reading debate said their say. Mr. Balfour asked whether it was 'every individual or only every male individual who would have equal rights under this Bill?' Mr. Bonar Law's speech was remarkable for his reference to militancy. 'The Prime Minister points to us,' he said, 'and says if ever our party deals with the Franchise they will deal with it in the same way! Please Heaven! No—I do not say with the Pharisees that we are better than other men, but I am sure that we would not do it now, and I am equally sure that six years ago the Prime Minister would not have done it either.' He added that he was prepared to vote for a modified extension to the suffrage of women, but was opposed to adding 'something like 10,000,000 women to the Register'.

Mr. Asquith, who unlike our 'friends in the Cabinet' was far from silent on the theme of 'Votes for Women', made a threatening statement, fatal in advance to the Women's Amendment and utterly contrary to the letter and spirit of his 'pledge'. 'This Bill,' he said, 'does not propose to confer the Franchise upon women, and whatever extensions of the Franchise it makes are to male persons only. Speaking for myself I cannot help remembering that the House at an earlier stage of the Session rejected, with what I think sufficient decisiveness, the proposal to confer the Franchise upon women, and so far as I am concerned I dismiss at the moment as altogether improbable the hypothesis that the House of Commons is likely to stultify itself by reversing, in the same Session, the considered judgment at which it had arrived.'

Could political wrongfulness go further! Mr. Lloyd George had

declared that the torpedoing of the Conciliation Bill had cleared the way for the passing of the Woman Suffrage Amendment to the Reform Bill and now the same torpedoing of the Conciliation Bill was used by the Prime Minister as an obstruction and a destruction of any Women's Amendment.

After this blow, what was left but militancy! Petitions, fresh processions, meetings, were a waste of time and energy. Indeed they were hardly self-respecting. No peaceful evidence would have affected the Government's attitude.

The Prime Minister's speech on the second reading of the Reform Bill in which he wrecked, in anticipation, any Woman Suffrage Amendment, combined with the significant silence of Sir Edward Grey and Mr. Lloyd George on the same occasion and the inflammatory utterances of Mr. Hobhouse and others, was, of course, the immediate and direct cause of the Dublin affair and the stronger militancy of which that was an early example.

The Prime Minister, having torpedoed his own pledge to women, went to Dublin to advocate Home Rule. This was his first important engagement after his act of political destruction. A group of Suffragettes set out to make a protest in such a manner as might be possible in view of the extraordinary difficulties to be overcome. Strict precautions would exclude them from Mr. Asquith's meeting, yet they went on their mission. What they would do and how they would do it they knew not. Still less did we! But Mother and I were determined to stand by them. If they failed to make any protest it would not be for want of will and effort. They would respect life and hurt no one unless it were themselves, we knew. It was a rule we had laid down that none of our women had broken, and none of them ever did. We can, long after the battle is fought and won, proudly call our movement 'the Women's Bloodless Revolution'.

Mr. Asquith's Dublin meeting was strictly closed against women. The London *Times* reported it as 'probably the first public meeting addressed by a Minister during the year, into which the Militant Suffragists failed to penetrate'. However, the necessary question was asked by men. To suppress it completely, Cabinet Ministers would have had to speak to empty halls. Indignant at the exclusion of women from the Prime Minister's meeting, a woman militant had entered the

theatre where it was to be held, during an ordinary performance, and, waiting until the audience had filed out and left the theatre empty, set light to some curtains as a protest. The blaze was quickly extinguished. The Prime Minister was driving through Dublin with Mr. John Redmond when Mrs. Leigh rushed forward and dropped a small hatchet into the carriage. Mr. Redmond replied to a solicitous Irish M.P. who telegraphed inquiry: 'No serious hurt, except to the woman, who was nearly killed, and was arrested.'

Undeniably, militancy took a graver turn at Dublin, but Mr. Asquith himself had incurred that by his speech against the woman's cause.

At the laying of a foundation stone the Home Secretary had an adventure. He had laid the stone when suddenly a woman took and shook him by the arm, saying: 'We women protest against your inhuman treatment of women, in prison for a great cause, and against this disgraceful Manhood Suffrage Bill.' The *Irish Times* London correspondent was 'afraid there was more amusement than sorrow at Westminster when the news came that the Home Secretary had been shaken by a militant lady . . . many members on his own side could not resist a smile at the thought of the lady handling his stiff and sturdy figure as if it belonged to a naughty schoolboy'.

A magniloquent manifesto against Suffragette militancy was now written, signed, and sent to the Press by Lord Haldane and Sir Edward Grey, and some other men not in the Government. Certain non-militant suffrage leaders also appended their signatures. The manifesto pretended that the Government's 'pledge' still promised an 'opportunity' of getting 'some measure at least of enfranchisement for women by insertion of amendments into the Manhood Suffrage Bill' and that there was, in the 'judgment' of the signatories, 'one thing that can now imperil our position and that is the renewal of militancy'.

Alas! The Prime Minister's declaration that the passage of an unofficial amendment for Woman Suffrage was 'altogether impossible' had sounded the death knell of the opportunity promised by Sir Edward Grey and Lord Haldane.

Reports now appeared that the families of Cabinet Ministers were being guarded against the Suffragettes. This was needless, for the Suffragettes did not make war upon children. As for Cabinet Ministers' wives, we never dreamt of holding any of them responsible for the political misdeeds of their husbands! The Suffragettes did not want to

hurt a hair on the head even of a Cabinet Minister. A good shaking was the most they had to fear.

Another of our bravest women died at this time: Ellen Pitfield, who had borne her part nobly, had met the consequences on Black Friday and had endured imprisonment and forcible feeding. 'There are only two things that matter to me in this world,' she had said, 'principle and liberty.'

Five years' penal servitude! I was at Boulogne when the news reached me of the first long sentence of imprisonment for the vote. The Dublin trial had ended in this sentence for Mary Leigh and Gladys Evans. The Government I knew had long had in mind the use of such a penalty and now it had come. It was not unexpected, and yet it was a shock. We were in the last phase of the struggle, and it would be a hard and bitter phase, because the Government could not be induced to yield without a desperate effort. The 'opportunity' they had promised was a sham. If it had been sincerely offered, the Dublin protest would never have been made and the long sentence would never have been imposed. It was the hardest moment I had known since militancy began, for this was the full reality of the situation, not merely anticipated, but expressed in stern fact.

Again, as on that first day in Paris, I walked fast and far, summing up my forces for the new conflict. After that walk I wrote for our paper: 'These sentences of five years' penal servitude usher in the final stage of the struggle for votes for women. By meting out punishment of such appalling severity, the Government have created a situation which they themselves know cannot last. Even they realize that women cannot be sent for five years to convict prisons as the alternative to giving them the vote. They have gone to the extreme limit of coercion in the hope that it would put an end to the militant agitation and thus avert the necessity of giving votes to women. Their offer, made through the judge, that if militancy is abandoned the sentences shall be remitted, is proof of our contention. The Government have speculated upon the fear of the militants, but the militants have no fear, and therefore, instead of ending militancy, the Government find themselves driven to choose between votes or penal servitude for women.'

The Government chose, and persisted in the choice of penal servitude.

If the women's opportunity in connection with the Reform Bill had been, to quote Sir Edward Grey, a 'real opportunity' and 'not a bogus offer', the Government would now have caused the committee stage of the Reform Bill to be taken and the women's amendments voted upon. They did no such thing. The Reform Bill had been placed on the shelf and long remained there—and the two women were sent to prison for five years.

Then the Cabinet Ministers who had goaded and incited the women to their action went holiday-making!

Meanwhile the men leaders, who were planning Ulster militancy, were going forward with their plans quite freely, although the Liberal Press were urging the Government to launch a prosecution. The *Manchester Guardian* maintained that Mr. Bonar Law's policy was precisely on the same footing as the action taken by the two Suffragettes, that Sir Edward Carson and his Ulster friends had 'got up a movement' for organizing or threatening crimes, and that to attempt to obtain one's ends by threats of criminal acts was as definitely criminal as the acts themselves.

A petition, largely signed, was presented to the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Aberdeen, for the reduction of the five years' sentences, but without avail. The prisoners in penal servitude resorted to the hunger-strike. In five days Mrs. Baines was released because of illness, the doctors having declared forcible feeding dangerous especially in her case. Mrs. Leigh and Gladys Evans were being forcibly fed.

Away in Canada, Mr. and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence were recuperating. In their absence bailiffs were put in possession of their house under a Treasury Order for the payment of the costs of the prosecution in the Conspiracy case, which the judge had decreed must be paid by them, and Mother. As the Government had already deprived Mother of her home, as the alternative to surrendering her part in the movement, they could have recourse for payment to the Pethick Lawrences alone and they did not hesitate to do so.

Disturbing news of the condition of our prisoners in Mountjoy Prison in Ireland moved us to redoubled efforts for their release. A great protest meeting in Phoenix Park and a deputation to the Lord Lieutenant were arranged. Sir Victor Horsley and Professor Halliburton went to Dublin to speak with all their great medical authority against forcible feeding. The Prime Minister, playing on a Scottish golf course, was plainly told by a Suffragette: 'You ought to be

ashamed to be here, taking your holiday, while women are being forcibly fed in prison.' Mr. Asquith afterwards proceeded to Balmoral and there on the golf course were planted notices: 'Cabinet Ministers! Stop Forcible Feeding', and 'Votes for Women will mean Peace for Cabinet Ministers'.

The alarming rumours of Mrs. Leigh's condition culminated in her release, after a terrible ordeal. Meantime there had been in connection with the Home Rule question riots by men and the brandishing of firearms in Ireland, but no one was arrested, no one sent to penal servitude, no one forcibly fed!

The W.S.P.U. at this crisis turned to Mr. Lloyd George for a new declaration on the whole matter. He was to speak at a great gathering. The women were there to ask him: 'Is it peace?'

It was war. The women's experience at that meeting roused sympathetic protest on their behalf. It was the most powerful and conclusive evidence that women had nothing to hope from the Government's proffered 'opportunity'. That meeting was emphatically another turning-point in the history of militancy. It convinced our women anew that the original mild militancy had become a far more dangerous alternative than militancy which affected inanimate property. Women were driven by Cabinet Ministers, the real authors of Suffragette militancy, to rely upon stronger action. Symbolic militancy, as it might be called, was ended—not by us, but really by the Government. By seasons of truce we had staved off the present phase as long as possible, but the Government had precipitated and made inevitable the onward march.

On the return from Canada of Mr. and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, there was a consultation in France where I was now definitely established. The outcome of this and a further meeting was the serious announcement that they and we had parted company owing to a difference of opinion as to the policy to be pursued in future by the Women's Social and Political Union. Ownership and control of the paper *Votes for Women* they retained but their connection with the W.S.P.U. organization ceased. This separation on a matter of policy was a cause of deep regret to all concerned.

The second meeting between Mother, Mr. and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, Mrs. Tuke, Annie Kenney and myself took place in

London. I did not feel it right that Mother should not have me with her on that very serious occasion. So I decided to make a brief and, of course, secret visit to London. It was misty when I arrived, and I walked under cover of the mist to the same quiet abode which had sheltered me on the night before my first escape. A rumour started that I had left Paris. There were posters all over London: 'Is Christabel here?' Many false alarms and delusive clues of the past had made the police sceptical, so they apparently did not take this *real* clue seriously and I got away again by a more circuitous route! It was fortunate, for otherwise they could have made that comprehensive capture of the leaders which was their aim.

Mrs. Pankhurst appeared alone on the Albert Hall platform, without the hitherto invariable presence by her side of Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence. To her and to the assembled thousands of women this was a grief—as it was an evidence of the gravity of the hour and of the sternness of the fight to come. These women knew that Mother had not lightly parted from her who for the past six years had shared the immense moral and material responsibility of the movement. Formerly, Mother and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence and I had triply held the fort at these great meetings. Now Mother held it alone. I was in exile, Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, alas, with us no more! Pale, sorrowful, for all her brave determination, she knew what ruthless force she was defying for the sake of women, because the alternative to advance was, in her judgment, surrender. She knew how solitary she would be without Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, who, with her personal powers and her husband's support, and the strength that wealth gives, had been such a tower of strength. Not lightheartedly did Mother go forward alone. Two of her chief officers were by her side. There was Annie Kenney, sorrowful too, but following Mother, as she had followed her in those already far-away pioneer days, Annie a first prisoner, Annie: who had gone to London with £2 to plant the W.S.P.U. standard. Sorrowful also was Mrs. Tuke, the honorary secretary, advancing in the path of militancy regretfully but with utter conviction of necessity. The exile, too, was there in thought and by message.

'Whenever I stand on this platform,' said Mother, 'it seems to me that I am reviewing our forces rather than speaking to a political meeting. In any army you need unity of purpose—you also need unity of policy. In the Women's Social and Political Union, from its

initiation until quite recently, we have had complete unity of purpose and complete unity of policy. When unity of policy is no longer there a movement is weakened, and so it is better that those who cannot see eye to eye as to policy should part, free to continue their policy in their own way, uninfluenced by those with whom they can no longer agree. I give place to none in my appreciation and gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence (loud applause) for the incalculable services they have rendered to the militant agitation for woman suffrage, initiated by my daughter Christabel and myself and a handful of women more than six years ago.'

The resolution of the evening pledged those present to 'continue the militant agitation and to oppose the Government and their Parliamentary allies until the introduction of a measure for women's enfranchisement'.

Property meant much to the Government, said Mother, and it was through property that the Suffragettes would reach the Government. She wanted citizens who owned property to go to the Government and say: 'Examine the cause that leads to the destruction of property. Remove the discontent; then women will return to what they formerly were, the most law-abiding half of the community.'

'I incite this meeting to rebellion!' went on Mother. 'And my last word is for the Government. You have not dared to take the leaders of the Ulster rebellion for their incitement. Take me, if you will. But I tell you this: that so long as those who incite to armed rebellion and the destruction of human life are at liberty, you shall not keep me in prison. Women in this meeting, although the vote is not yet won, we who are militant are free. Remember only the freedom of the spirit and join this magnificent rebellion of the women of the twentieth century.'

A timely word was said by Annie Kenney. 'Some are asking whether we shall have another deputation that will again mean the imprisonment of hundreds of women. We would rather, now, that they should skirmish about the country, at liberty, creating a situation intolerable for the Government who understand no better argument for giving women the vote.' Dealing with the possible consequence to herself of these words, she said: 'We must not fear a conspiracy trial or anything else that the Government may do against us.'

Mother had again chosen the harder part in 1912, as she had chosen it in 1905, when militancy began. In 1905 she chose, for the sake of

womanhood, the ruin and ostracism and all the suffering implicit for her in her eldest daughter's act, which was also her own act and but the first link in a chain of future acts. In 1912, dedicating herself anew, Mother chose, if it should so happen, a convict's grave. Her choice was not lightly made. She was only human. Self-interest, consideration for her own health, for her own welfare then and later, would have prompted the abandonment of militancy. She had won a supreme 'nuisance value' and what might she not have gained for herself by abandoning militancy!

Mother and I could have ended militancy as easily as we began it! When we declared the Conciliation Bill Truce, there *was* a truce. When we declared the end of the truce and the renewal of militancy, militancy was renewed. When, on the outbreak of war in 1914, Mother and I declared an armistice with the Government and the cessation of militancy for the duration of the war, militancy ceased!

I can picture Mother on the Albert Hall platform that night, slender and fragile, rather tired, yet erect, head lifted, her eyes, large under their high-arched brows, looking upon the vast audience and through and beyond that place and hour—to what was coming upon her.

No alternative! That was her reason. No way but militancy, to induce a Government, founded on votes, to do justice to the voteless. One other way indeed there might be if all the Parliamentary supporters of our cause had made their support of the Government programme conditional upon the granting of votes for women. But willing Members of Parliament were not in sufficient numbers to do this. The Conservatives had their own quarrels with the Government and were not in any case strong enough to defeat them. Nationalist and Labour M.P.s had reasons of their own for wanting to defer a General Election.

Mother, therefore, declared her hard, her heartrending, choice.

Our sterner militancy, employed in the final two years before the war, can be summed up as a response to the open challenge and incitement to strong militant measures delivered to us by Cabinet Ministers and their expressed contempt of militancy in its first mild phase; as a consequence of the feebleness of pledged supporters of our cause in Parliament, and as a faint imitation—except that we respected human life—of the militant policy chosen, as we know, successfully, by Ulster and endorsed by the Conservative Party.

Many persons were assuring us that the Government's 'pledge' offered a real chance of getting the vote by an unofficial amendment to their Manhood Suffrage Bill. But, as we pointed out, members of the Government had already, by their influence upon rank-and-file M.P.s, destroyed every chance of carrying an unofficial amendment. Mrs. Fawcett herself, regarded as being less suspicious than we were of the Government's pledges, had said: 'It is not a straight fight. No stone will be left unturned by Mr. Asquith to defeat an amendment. . . .'

A young Suffragette was now put on trial on the charge of being found one night possessed with the wherewithal to break into the house of a member of the Government, Mr. Lewis Harcourt, with intent to enter and set fire to it. 'This young lady of good education,' as the prosecution truly described her, was defended by counsel who urged that 'she had taken great interest in a cause and had adopted methods in furtherance of that cause, from the highest and purest motives which could animate any human being'. A member of the Cabinet, Mr. Hobhouse, had, as counsel for the defence reminded the Court, actually hurled at the women a challenge, saying he did not believe that there was a serious demand for the vote because they had not burned down a castle as men had done when they demanded the vote. The women had seen their peaceful methods ignored. In Ireland, Sir Edward Carson, one of the leaders of the legal profession, had been preaching and justifying violence and armed resistance to law by voteless men, and had challenged the Government to prosecute him, saying that he realized what he was doing and the meaning of it. They did not prosecute him and they did not prosecute the cattle-drivers and those guilty of agrarian outrages in Ireland. These were the acts of men who had votes! Women militants had not votes and they were prosecuted. The Government were responsible for the crisis arising from the militancy of the women. The jury, in finding Miss Helen Craggs¹ guilty, asked that she might be treated as a political offender. 'I hold that militant Suffragettes stand in a position analogous to that of soldiers,' the prisoner said, 'and because I fight in a cause as good as any for which men have fought, I say, my Lord, that I am morally guiltless.' The judge rejected this plea and sentenced her to hard labour. The letter found upon the prisoner when arrested contained these words: 'When Cabinet Ministers tell us that violence is the only argument they understand, it becomes our duty to give them that

¹ Later to become Mrs. McCombie and in 1957 Lady Pethick-Lawrence.—Ed.

argument.' After a hunger-strike and forcible feeding, Miss Craggs was released lest, as the Home Secretary expressed it, 'dangerous consequences might ensue'. Later the Government showed more indifference than this to the risk of dangerous consequences to their suffrage prisoners.

Indignation at the treatment of the women's cause prompted one Labour M.P., Mr. George Lansbury, to resign his seat in Parliament. In the by-election that followed he had to contend with the opposition of all who knew that his re-election would be a mandate to deal with the woman suffrage question, and the lukewarmness of those not prepared to go as far as he did in supporting the cause, and he was not returned.

The present Poet Laureate, John Masefield, publicly championed the militant women. 'I blush for what our grandchildren will say of the men of my generation,' he said. '“Were they sane in their day?” they will ask. “They cried out upon those who burned Joan of Arc. Yet when they had Joan of Arc among them they lacked the living eyes to see her. They thrust her into prison with the rest, as an unsexed, shrieking sister.”'

A great if unwilling tribute was paid by a magistrate at the trial of one of our militants, Gladys Evans. 'It is difficult,' he said, 'to carry out the law strictly in the case of people who are absolutely reckless of consequences, and for whom punishment has no terrors and penal servitude no shame.'

1912 - 1913

Broken Pledges—Guerilla Warfare

THREATENING rumours ran that the Prime Minister, despite the assurance he had given to women, would resign if the Votes for Women Amendment to the Reform Bill were carried. He gave no contradiction to these rumours, and the belief therefore spread that the Government would 'break up' if the Women's Amendment were carried. Already, therefore, M.P.s were being prompted to choose between breaking their Suffrage pledges and breaking up the Government.

The fresh political betrayal that was so obviously preparing was rousing women to more militant action. Pillar-box protests were many. Charred paper was put through the letter slit in some cases to give an impression of militancy, that counted as much as the real thing.

We were again forewarning all Suffragists that the Government would bring about the defeat of every Votes for Women Amendment just as they had brought about the blocking and torpedoing of the Conciliation Bill. An essential difference between the non-militants and ourselves was this: their way was to take Government 'pledges' more or less seriously when offered and to be indignant after they were broken. We, especially since the Government's conduct in Coronation Year, declined any acceptance of Government pledges which we knew in advance would, as they did, turn out to be worthless.

The year closed amid rumours of a Government split and collapse if the House of Commons should add Woman Suffrage to the Reform Bill. The Prime Minister, while thinking votes for women 'disastrous', might nevertheless 'bow his head to the House of Rimmon', said the famous Parliamentary commentator of those days, 'Toby, M.P.',¹ but

¹ Sir Henry Lucy.

'others of the Prime Minister's colleagues in the Government are not likely to display an equal measure of judicious flexibility'.

By such hints and warnings were the pledge-bound supporters of the women's cause moved to break faith and to assist the Government by voting against the amendments. 'Who will rid us of this troublesome cause?' was in effect the Liberal leaders' plea to their followers and allies. We saw the response to it. All M.P.s who thought they had anything to gain by keeping the Liberal Government in power were tempted to oppose any and every Woman Suffrage Bill or amendment, lest the Government fall to pieces. A General Election would have resulted then and M.P.s were not anxious to hasten this. Further, all who had some favourite measure which they expected the Government to carry were tempted to sacrifice woman suffrage in order to keep the Government in office until this measure should be passed. The Irish Nationalist M.P.s, upon whose support the Government's existence depended, were prompted to break their Woman Suffrage pledges by this fear of wrecking the Government pledged to carry Home Rule.

Mr. T. P. O'Connor has described how the argument was spread among Irish M.P.s that they would best serve the cause of Home Rule by defeating woman suffrage, since they would thus rescue the Prime Minister from the disagreeable necessity of fulfilling his pledge to the women, and preserve the Government from breaking up before Home Rule was passed.

One Liberal M.P. actually wrote to the newspapers begging others to co-operate with him in defeating woman suffrage in order to spare the Prime Minister the humiliation of doing for that cause what he had pledged himself and his Government to do.

All this proved the political wisdom of maintaining a distinctively women's movement in complete independence of all political parties.

The New Year dawned in cloud for the Suffrage cause. The Government seemed bent on breaking their pledge, poor as that pledge was, and keeping women still voteless. Mr. Asquith's resignation, Mr. Harcourt's resignation, Mr. Winston Churchill's resignation were being much rumoured, as the consequence of adding Woman Suffrage to the forthcoming Franchise Bill. But no rumours were heard of the resignations of Sir Edward Grey and Mr. Lloyd George

if woman suffrage were *not* carried! Our 'supporters' in the Cabinet were more pliable than our opponents!

A working women's deputation, led by Mrs. Drummond and Annie Kenney, was to see Mr. Lloyd George at the Treasury. In the name of the working women he had torpedoed the Conciliation Bill. Now what assurance had he to offer that he would get working women included in the Government's Franchise Bill?

Mr. Asquith declined to receive the deputation, as he had 'nothing to add to the statement which he had made in November 1911', and Mrs. Drummond did not urge her request further, as she did not wish to provide the Government or any of our critics with the argument, false though it would have been, that by insistence upon seeing Mr. Asquith and the consequent imprisonment of the deputation, the Suffragettes had been responsible for the non-inclusion of women in the Franchise Bill. Large numbers of working women from the North and the Midlands, as well as from London, were anxious to join the deputation, but Mr. Lloyd George had stipulated for a small deputation and they, with our members in general, were to assemble at a special W.S.P.U. conference, to hear the report of the deputation and to watch developments in Parliament.

Suffragettes have since read with surprise that the Home Secretary and Mr. Lloyd George himself thought that the deputation might 'do something violent', and that a large table was accordingly protectively put in position between the women and Mr. Lloyd George, who afterwards answered Lord Riddell's question: 'How did you get on with the Suffragettes at the deputation, and were you nervous?' by saying: 'Not badly—no, danger is a curious thing. It braces me up.' It did not so much as enter the head of the 'General' and Annie and the others to harm a hair of the Minister's head. He had agreed to receive the deputation, and words, not blows, were all the Suffragettes had ready for him.

The deputation included a teacher, a boot and shoe operative, a laundress, a pit-brow worker, a tailoress, a hospital nurse, a fisherwoman, a cotton operative, a weaver of woollen goods.

'The Prime Minister promised,' Annie Kenney said to Mr. Lloyd George, 'that the Government would remain neutral towards the Woman Suffrage Amendments, but now some Cabinet Ministers are threatening to resign if a Woman Suffrage Amendment is carried. Are you and Sir Edward Grey ready to resign if it is not carried?'

'You are a man of power,' said Mrs. Drummond. 'The Old Age Pensions Act and the Insurance Act show what you can do when you stick to it, and what you have done with regard to these measures you can do for woman suffrage. We have come for those millions of votes you talked about. They must be ours this Session, according to the hope you have held out. We will give you the help of women in carrying it through, we will work throughout the country and stand with you on the same platform to support the Bill. We don't want to be your enemies. You very kindly made arrangements to see us today and we want to come and see you again after the amendments are carried.' 'You have kept your promise to the minute, Mrs. Drummond,' said Mr. Lloyd George, 'and I thank you very much.'

Sir Edward Grey then came in and Mr. Lloyd George explained that the Government intended the Reform Bill to go through all its stages that Session. The Government's honour and honesty were vitally involved in Mr. Lloyd George's next words. 'Will the Bill be drafted in such form as to make it possible for Woman Suffrage Amendments to be introduced?' he was asked, and replied: 'We have got beyond that. We have got out a time-table which enables the four Woman Suffrage Amendments to be discussed and voted upon. There will be moved today by the Prime Minister a guillotine resolution which specifically mentions the four Woman Suffrage Amendments and enables the House of Commons to vote upon each and all of them.'

'Furthermore, and this is very important,' added Mr. Lloyd George, 'the Prime Minister was asked by Mrs. Fawcett: "Will the Government regard any amendment enfranchising women, if carried, as an integral part of the Bill and defend it in all its stages?" The Prime Minister said: "You shall certainly have the opportunity to introduce into the Reform Bill qualifications for the suffrage of women if a majority of the House of Commons is prepared to assent to it."'

Mr. Lloyd George denied that any of his colleagues in the Cabinet had threatened to resign, but said: 'I am not complaining that Miss Kenney has brought it to our attention, because I know there have been rumours of the kind.' He thanked the deputation for the very clear way in which they had put their case and hoped their speeches would be widely circulated. Sir Edward Grey countersigned Mr. Lloyd George's assurances and the deputation withdrew.

That very same day in the House of Commons the Government's

'pledge' was exploded like a poison-gas bomb in the face of voteless women! The Speaker, in answer to a question by Mr. Bonar Law, stated that a Woman Suffrage Amendment would effect so great a change in the Government's Reform Bill that it would be necessary to withdraw the Bill and introduce another. No precedent existed for this ruling by the Speaker. Precedent was indeed against it, because when a Woman Suffrage Amendment was moved to the Reform Bills of 1867 and 1884, the Speaker did *not* rule that its adoption would necessitate the withdrawal of these measures. Lord Randolph Churchill had in 1884 objected that the Woman Suffrage Amendment was outside the scope of the Reform Bill of that year, but the Speaker and the Chairman of Committee agreed that his objection must be overruled.

Another fact that should have 'torpedoed' the Speaker's hostile ruling in 1913 was that women had obtained the municipal franchise by an amendment to a Government Bill moved by a private member, Mr. Jacob Bright.

Mr. Bonar Law had done good service in raising the point while there was still time to adjust matters. The only honest course for the Government to take when the Speaker gave his ruling was to say: 'We will withdraw this Bill and immediately introduce another one, named and drafted in conformity with our pledge to the women.' Instead they withdrew their Bill and would not introduce another drafted in conformity with their pledge. It has been said that the Speaker's ruling was unexpected by the Government, but that was no reason for making it, as they said, a way of escape from their own pledged word.

Mr. Asquith made the next move by asking the Speaker to pronounce more definitely as to whether any and every Woman Suffrage Amendment proposed would bring the present Bill '*within, not the rule, but the practice* as regards withdrawal?' We were to be victims not even of a rule, but of a practice—one which conveniently served the purpose of our opponents! 'I have formed the opinion,' said the Speaker, 'that the admission of any one of these amendments would so alter the Bill as practically to convert it into a new Bill. In these circumstances, I shall advise the House that the Bill be withdrawn and that a motion should be made to ask leave to introduce a new Bill.'

The Speaker's advice was cast aside by the Government. A new Bill was not introduced. The pledge to women was broken. The vaunted offer was after all vain and void.

A new pledge was offered—but for ‘next year’. This new pledge would switch us back to a Private Member’s Bill, without the Government support which had been promised for woman suffrage after its incorporation in the Government’s own Franchise Bill. Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Lloyd George, and the rest of the Cabinet majority pledged to woman suffrage, could have insisted—but did not—on the introduction of the new Franchise Bill suggested by the Speaker. The Government’s pledge to women would thus have been so far fulfilled. On the other hand, a Liberal newspaper mentioned ‘repeated rumours’ that the Prime Minister and other anti-Suffragists in the Cabinet ‘contemplate resignation if the sex barrier at elections be removed’. Yet the Prime Minister and his anti-Suffragist colleagues had for nearly two years been bound by a Government pledge to carry woman suffrage into law, if adopted by the House of Commons.

The Speaker’s ruling seems to have been viewed by the Government as a convenient escape. When Lord Riddell asked whether it was not a ‘Godsend to the Government in view of the Suffrage differences’ among Ministers, Mr. Lloyd George, laughing, replied: ‘You have hit the right nail on the head.’

Suffragists were unanimous in repudiating the new pledge. The non-militants, with Mrs. Fawcett at the head, were ‘furiously indignant, and utterly rejected Mr. Asquith’s derisory offer’. Mr. Asquith, they said, had ‘completely misled’ them and the crisis was to them ‘unexpected’ as well as acute. Like ourselves, they now demanded a Government measure, and this demand, which we had made as early as 1905—eight years previously—became the united demand of the whole woman suffrage movement.

We militants were calmer in feeling than the non-militants, because we had always expected to be, as the non-militants expressed it, ‘defrauded of the promised opportunity’. Furthermore, we had the resource of *action*!

The great betrayal left Mrs. Pankhurst calm, yet firm and prepared. ‘The farce of the Reform Bill “opportunity” is at an end and in its stead we are offered another insult to our intelligence,’ she said. ‘Many women have told us that they intend to be militant at the proper time. I intend to be militant too. We have gone through various stages in this movement; we have allowed ourselves to be battered by the police, as they carried out the Government’s orders, and by hooligans whom the Government are quite willing should

have the vote. Now, if we wish to succeed, we must take to guerilla warfare. We have to fight by our woman's wit. One thing we regard as sacred and that is human life. When people ask us why we touch the property of people not responsible, we reply: "They are responsible unless they help to put a stop to this injustice to women."'

General Flora Drummond stood for a public interview with Mr. Lloyd George in strict fulfilment of the promise he had made to her. She led her deputation to the House of Commons to claim the interview. After a struggle, in which she was hurt, fainted and fell to the ground, she was arrested and next day fined and charged 7s. 6d. for medical attention given to her at the police station. On refusing to pay, she was sent to prison for two weeks. Mrs. Despard and other members of the Women's Freedom League made a protest and were likewise imprisoned.

Out of prison again, General Drummond wrote once more to Mr. Lloyd George, requesting a public interview because 'the question we have to discuss is of serious and national importance and the public have therefore a right to know what we say to you and what you say to us'. The General believed in 'open covenants, openly arrived at'! 'Secret diplomacy' was, however, the choice of Mr. Lloyd George.

On behalf of the working women's deputation, she reminded Mr. Lloyd George that he had promised to see the deputation again, after the women's amendments had been discussed. 'The amendments have been torpedoed, not discussed,' said the General, 'but there is just as much and even more reason why we should see you again. The position is most serious. We want to discuss with you the statement made in the House of Commons and other matters affecting the cause.'

Mr. Lloyd George agreed that he had promised to see representatives of the Suffragists, but did not consider any useful purpose would be served by again seeing a large deputation and would be happy to see Mrs. Drummond, and perhaps one or two other representatives, for a 'private discussion'. 'A private interview,' the General wrote, 'is obviously no fulfilment of a promise to receive us in a public deputation.'

Meantime, guerilla militancy was proceeding. Many militants had been restive for some time, considering that it would be more dignified to anticipate the sorry outcome of the Government's now broken

pledge than await it passively. As leaders, we had felt bound to restrain this eagerness but now there was no reason for delay. Nor were the women willing to return to the former ways of militancy, which led them in droves to prison and left Cabinet Ministers sneering at methods so relatively untroublesome to themselves, though so great a trial to the women.

Mrs. Fawcett's declared objection to a plan of voluntary starvation by non-militants—that it would inconvenience only the women and their families, without in the least inconveniencing the Government—was applying to mild militancy, such as deputations to the House of Commons, followed by imprisonment and hunger-strike. Remain, if you can, free to fight another day and another, and another! Face imprisonment if it should come with courage, but do not run into it! This was now W.S.P.U. policy.

One woman, however, could not avoid arrest—Mother! Already, Members of Parliament were asking the Government whether they intended to arrest Mrs. Pankhurst for the many acts of other Suffragettes.

Mother knew that the Government would let Mr. Bonaw Law and Sir Edward Carson prepare bloodshed in Ulster, without lifting a finger against them, because they were men and leaders of men voters, but on a far less serious count would arrest and imprison her because she was a woman and a leader of voteless women.

Years of imprisonment, with or without hunger-strike—that was Mother's fate and she knew it!

Heroine! That is the name for her and I say it, though I am her daughter. How small we all look in comparison, except the other women who took upon themselves the sterner deeds and also faced long years of imprisonment.

The Prime Minister ventured to the Kinnauld Hall in Dundee. 'Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,' thrilled the organ. Sang the audience: 'Wha wad be a traitor knave? Wha sae base to be a slave?'

The freedom of the city was then presented to Mr. Asquith. 'Ladies and gentlemen——' he began. 'And Suffragettes! Don't forget them,' came as an intimation of their presence and their claim. Suffrage protests punctuated all Mr. Asquith's speech, several times silenced him, and were the sensation of the evening. A Dundee newspaper reported 'the long fruitless search' made by the police, with many assistants, to discover hidden Suffragette hecklers and said that

no doubt the ingenious young ladies were 'enjoying their beauty sleep' while the searchers were 'condemned to prowling about in cellars and on roofs'.

The protesters in the meeting were as usual ejected by force, but they had said their say and justly rebuked the Premier.

The ingenuity and the pertinacity of the Suffragette guerillists were extraordinary. Never a soul was hurt, but the struggle continued. Golf greens suffered on one occasion by the carving on the turf of 'Votes Before Sport' and 'No Votes, No Golf'! The editor of *Golfing* complained on the plea that 'golfers are not usually very keen politicians'. 'Perhaps they will be now,' said the Suffragettes.

The damage to property was more spectacular than serious. An orchid house at Kew, a kiosk in Regent's Park, were typical objects of militancy. Museums began to be closed, here and there, with preventive caution, to the vexation of American visitors. Mr. Lloyd George's house at Walton Heath paid the price of its owner's deed. It was uninhabited and, indeed, not yet completely built.

Mother was thereupon arrested. Especially sensitive to any act that directly affected themselves, the Government indiscreetly made the first casualty to property owned by one of their members the occasion for arresting her.

She was taken to Scotland Yard and thence to Leatherhead. Next morning at the Epsom Police Court she was charged with 'counselling and procuring' the act of the 'unknown persons' who had damaged the house in course of building for Mr. Lloyd George, at Walton Heath. The accusation was based upon Mrs. Pankhurst's declared acceptance of responsibility for what the militant women might do in the struggle for enfranchisement. She had not known beforehand of the Lloyd George house affair, but as a matter of principle she was determined to stand by those who were pursuing militancy in the way facts had convinced her was the only effectual protest against the Government.

Mother reserved her defence and was committed for trial at the Summer Assizes to be held at Guildford in May. Bail she would not apply for as it meant giving an undertaking as to her activities. If the King's Speech did not promise a measure of votes for women, she must maintain her freedom of action. She would refuse bail and go to prison, but she would at once adopt the hunger-strike. 'Therefore,' said she, 'if I am alive to be tried at the Summer Assizes, you will

try a dying person'. Could she not be tried elsewhere, she asked, so that the trial might take place without delay? But the prosecution 'were afraid not'.

She was taken to Holloway Prison and began the hunger-strike. There were Suffrage prisoners already there, and one, Lillian Lenton, had only just been released, seriously ill with pleurisy, due to the entrance of liquid into her lung during forcible feeding. Sylvia, Joyce Locke, Miss Bennett, Miss Lambert, Miss Hall, and others were prisoners at this time and were hunger-striking and being fed by force.

Realizing that Mother's hunger-strike would mean her death long before the three months had ended, or else her early release, the Government found within twenty-four hours that an early trial at the Central Criminal Court in London would after all be possible. Mother therefore gave an undertaking for this short time and was released on bail.

'By what right do we claim to impose our laws on these women and on what principle of good government are we entitled to punish them? For my part I find the question difficult to answer, for the basis of democratic government is the consent of the governed,' wrote a Liberal M.P., Mr. McCurdy, who acknowledged that the Suffragette methods, far from being unreasonable, erred rather on the side of logic.

1913—A New Session

The Royal Opening—‘Cat and Mouse’ Act—Second Conspiracy Trial—Holiday and Re-arrest

THE King and Queen were driving to Westminster to open the new Session of Parliament when a group of women advanced to present a petition to His Majesty. Five were arrested, petition in hand. They asserted before the magistrate the legality of their action and the illegality of their arrest, according to the Bill of Rights which declares it is the right of the subject to petition the King and all commitments and prosecutions for such petitioning are illegal.

This new session gave the Government a belated chance to save their honour. They did not take it. The King’s Speech was eagerly awaited but a Plural Voting Bill for men only, without even a pretence of being open to amendment, was what it contained!

Apart from refusing to keep their own oft-repeated pledge to give women an ‘effectual opportunity’ of getting the vote, the Government were now threatening new legislation to enable more stringent coercion of Mrs. Pankhurst and her militants. The Prime Minister’s reply to a question by Lord Robert Cecil stated that the Government were considering the introduction of a Bill for this purpose. Lord Robert had said, when the Government’s promised ‘opportunity’ crashed, that ‘It is all very well to denounce the militancy of militant women but conceive what any body of men would have done if they had been so treated. It would not have been a casual outrage—it would have been an insurrection.’

The Government’s new plan was formulated in the ‘Cat and Mouse’ Act, a statutory memorial, unfortunately ineffaceable, of their lamentable treatment of women and their cause. It was a revolutionary Constitutional innovation. Yet a Liberal Government preferred

this unprecedented measure of repression to giving women the vote.

The Home Secretary had argued that the alternative to forcible feeding was 'to let the prisoners die'. He assured the House that women were prepared to die for the cause. 'It has been said,' he said, 'that not many women would die, but I think you would find that thirty, forty or fifty would come up, one after another.' Finally, he foreshadowed the introduction of a new legislative Act to deal with the matter. This proved to be the 'Cat and Mouse' Act, as it was quickly named by critics¹ of the Government.

This new way of coercion was meant for Mrs. Pankhurst. Her trial and the passing of the 'Cat and Mouse' Act came together.

Mother left a message as she went to her trial. 'It is practically certain what the result of the trial will be,' she said. 'I shall be convicted, but whether I am sent to prison for a long or short period will make no difference to me, I look upon myself as a prisoner of war, under no moral obligation to accept my sentence, and that being my position, I shall terminate my imprisonment at the earliest possible moment, by means of the hunger-strike. I hope to be present with you at the Albert Hall meeting, but if I am not there it will be because the Government have discovered some new method of keeping me alive, or, because I am dead.'

The first odium of a Police Court trial and a short sentence on a more or less technical charge had long faded and turned to honour. That had become a sort of presentation at Court. Thousands of women today regret that they never won, or were born too late to win, that honour.

The Government prepared for their new fight against her by introducing this new measure, framed with the purpose of making her serve, in spite of the hunger-strike, every single day of the long sentence that was surely awaiting her.

Mrs. Pankhurst pleaded 'Not Guilty'. She conducted her own defence. Mr. A. E. W. Marshall was her solicitor. 'These trials afford us, at a very great price,' she said, 'an opportunity to get into the minds of the men who try us, something of what women feel about their political position.'

'It is a very serious thing when a large number of respectable, normally law-abiding persons of upright life seriously make up their mind that they are justified in breaking the law. I am

¹ Originally in the columns of *Votes for Women*.—Ed.

charged with inciting. I pointed out to my audiences that we have been directly incited by members of the present Government. If incitement to acts of violence is wrong and I am to be punished for inciting women to such acts, how is it that members of His Majesty's Government are not put into the dock by my side, for they are equally guilty! Threats are being made that Ireland is to be drowned in blood if Home Rule is forced upon unwilling Ulster. The people who utter this incitement are not in the position I am in, they are voters and have constitutional means of prevention and redress of grievances. . . . I ask you, gentlemen of the jury, is it right that you should assist in punishing women who, because of the impossibility of getting reform of the laws that affect them very closely, are driven to take the stand they are taking? Not one of us would, if women were free, be law-breakers. We are women who seriously believe that the hard path we are treading is the only path to enfranchisement. Gentlemen of the jury, I ask you to give your verdict not solely upon my case but upon this agitation and to give a verdict of "Not Guilty". The verdict was 'Guilty, with a strong recommendation to mercy'. Another moral acquittal by the public. Little the Government heeded this verdict! The quality of their mercy was strained indeed! . . . The judge imposed sentence of three years' penal servitude.

At this harsh sentence the Court echoed with cries of sympathy and with cheers for Mother.

Mother now entered upon the ordeal, long drawn out, which was to last until the outbreak of the Great War. She was taken to Holloway Prison, just as Cabinet Ministers were looking forward to a happy week-end. During their talk over the tea-cups they would perhaps find opportunity to discuss how to get rid finally of this business of votes for women. They had got 'the mother' in for three years' penal servitude. They would soon have the 'Cat and Mouse' Act carried into law as a means of seeing that she would serve her sentence and would be kept on the sick list when she was not in prison. The next thing was to deal with 'the daughter'! She was out of their reach, running the movement from Paris. They had tried to get her back, but she would not come. Waves of suggestion had gone forth and even some friends of the movement, in all sincerity of course, had pleaded with Christabel to come back to London, 'You are needed in London!' they would say. 'I am doing my work from here as though I were in London,' she would answer. 'But you are needed on the platform!'

'I can very well be spared, we have so many fine speakers.' 'Ah, but no *real* eloquence!' This was amusing, considering that they had Mother herself, as well as many other exceptionally eloquent speakers. The Exile was flattered as being 'indispensable in London'. She was taunted with cowardice for keeping away. Nothing moved her. As I told one kind visitor who begged me to return with her: 'I could not do it. It is as though a high, hard wall stood between me and that boat. I must not go!'

Very well, then! If the Exile would not return, to be arrested and put out of control of the movement in that way, her long-distance control from Paris must be broken. Annie Kenney must be arrested; then what could Christabel do! We had suspected that this was coming. Waves of insinuation had tended to make things difficult for Annie already. She had been told she ought to 'think for herself' and not be 'just a blotter for Christabel'. This was a joke between us and she took to signing her letters to me: 'The Blotter'. Her staunchness and loyalty had been a rock on which the Government's attack had broken. They knew it. Arrest Annie Kenney then, and control from Paris would be ended. She was arrested a few days after Mother's three years' penal servitude began.

All this time militant acts were taking place in various parts of the country. The Government's attack upon Mother, the forcible feeding of prisoners, the arrest of Annie Kenney, far from stopping militancy, incited the women who were out of gaol to greater militancy than before. Empty houses were demolished; a race-course stand was destroyed; the glass covering several pictures in the Manchester Art Galley was smashed. . . . The militant activity of our women was amazing, yet not so much as a cat was hurt.

Mother at once resorted to the hunger-strike, on reaching Holloway. Questioned in Parliament, Mr. McKenna said that she was not taking food. He had nothing to say as to her release. The whole world was watching the issue of this life-and-death struggle between one fragile woman and the British Government, in wonderment at the measures used by the Mother of Parliaments to coerce the women who wished only for the right to share in electing that Parliament. Nine days without food and Mother was released in an exhausted condition. The Government had let her go very far before releasing

her. Only fifteen days and, according to the terms of her release under the 'Cat and Mouse' Act, she must go back to prison! The Government rushed the 'Cat and Mouse' Act through Parliament as fast as they could, in order to have more power for defeating her. Ostensibly divided in theory on the question of votes for women, the Government united in coercing, more and more harshly, the women who demanded the vote. The 'Cat and Mouse' Act is a memorial to the self-sacrifice of Mother and the numbers of other women who suffered under its cruel procedure.

'I have not the necessary powers,' complained the Home Secretary, when he introduced the Bill, 'to deal with an unprecedented set of circumstances. Our former laws have been adequate in dealing with ordinary prisoners, but a new set of prisoners have come.' Dropping his former claim that forcible feeding was 'medical treatment', he admitted 'that forcible feeding, whether for those who suffer it or for those who administer it, is a most objectionable practice'. Other means ought to be sought, means which, he claimed, the 'Cat and Mouse' Act would provide. A moment later he asked the House to leave him the power of forcible feeding, to be used at his will and pleasure. So the 'Cat and Mouse' Bill was not an alternative to 'the most objectionable practice of forcible feeding'! It was an addition to it. Yet another extra weapon he sought: 'the power to release without remission of sentence'. The ticket-of-leave, known to the existing law, involved remission of sentence for the time it was in operation. The Home Secretary could not accept that Mrs. Pankhurst's fifteen days' sick leave from prison should be deducted from her three years' term of penal servitude. The Home Secretary claimed that if Parliament would carry this Act, they would be saved the spectacle, which they now saw, of women defying the law and saying publicly that they would commit militant acts, be sent to prison, be out again in a few days, and be militant again. His claim was falsified by the event. Militancy was more vigorous and widespread than ever, after the 'Cat and Mouse' Act was carried and operated against women.

The Home Secretary held out a hint of peace and pardon to all or any Suffragettes who would abandon militancy! Peace without honour!

The first voice raised to condemn the 'Cat and Mouse' Act was that of Mr. McCurdy, the Liberal M.P. 'The object of this Bill is to restrict the liberty of the subject,' he said. 'Each of these licences is a fresh imprisonment, subject to conditions to be left to the discretion

of the Home Secretary.' Mr. McCurdy then read from the speeches made in the dock by suffrage prisoners, showing the intelligent political reasoning and high motive prompting them to their acts. 'The plea of these women is,' said McCurdy, 'that they are forced into illegal propaganda by the fact that they have found all avenues of constitutional redress closed to them.'

Mr. Atherley Jones predicted the futility of the Bill and condemned it as 'entirely contrary to the principle of our criminal administrator. There is no precedent for it in the penology either of this country or of any other European country, so far as I know. It proposed indefinitely to extend the imprisonment. I regard the Bill as establishing a very dangerous precedent, by giving the Executive powers which may be, and history informs us are too often, likely to be abused.'

This was a strange measure to be proposed by a Liberal Government, remarked Lord Robert Cecil. His remedy was deportation.

'I submit that you should go to the root of the cause which creates these martyrs,' said Mr. D. M. Mason. 'The cause is the denial of justice to these women and until you face that manfully and straightforwardly and deal with the cause of their distrust, you will never be able to remedy the situation.'

Viscount Wolmer remarked that even if he believed with its supporters that the Bill would break the spirit of the Suffragettes, he could not vote for it for: 'I do not think that they can be suppressed by force in the manner proposed by this Bill. They are only criminals for the sake of what they believe to be a just cause; apart from the question of woman suffrage these women are like any other ordinary people.'

Anti-Suffragist though he was, Sir Arthur Markham, M.P., denounced the 'Cat and Mouse' Bill as framed, he said, 'with diabolical ingenuity'. He disapproved of the whole system of bringing prisoners backwards and forwards from prison. As to forcible feeding, he said: 'We talk of the heroism of soldiers, but there is no heroism that I can conceive which is greater than that of a person in cold blood, day by day, submitting herself to this horrible process and fighting successfully, as women have done, against the efforts to forcibly feed them.'

Despite these arguments against it, the 'Cat and Mouse' Bill passed its second reading by a majority of 296 votes to 43, the majority in its favour being composed of men of all parties in the House. In quick

time it passed through all its stages in the House of Commons and House of Lords, and was the law of the land.

The Liberal Government, newly armed against Mrs. Pankhurst and our Union, now struck another blow. Mother was in prison, Annie Kenney was under arrest. General Drummond had just replaced Annie, who herself was to have replaced Mother, as chairman at an Albert Hall meeting. Now the General was arrested because of her speech that night. She had denounced the Government's treatment of Mother and their whole Suffrage policy, and she had pointed to the notorious speeches of certain Ministers as provocative of militancy. She claimed that if Mr. Bonar Law was justified in upholding Ulster in going 'to any length of resistance', so was she where the women's resistance to disfranchisement was concerned.

Another summons was served upon Mr. George Lansbury, who had been among the speakers at the Albert Hall meeting and had asked why highly placed Privy Councillors should be immune from the penalties imposed on Mrs. Pankhurst.

'*Raided!*' This one word appeared blackly on the front page of our paper. The Government had completed their *coup* by raiding Lincoln's Inn House and seizing Rachel Barrett, assistant editor. They also arrested members of the office staff, Miss Kerr, Mrs. Sanders, wife of Alderman Sanders, and the Misses Lennox and Lake, though they had no part in militancy and no responsibility in connection with it. Documents were seized and taken to Scotland Yard. The Government had thus, as they thought, demolished the W.S.P.U. as an effective force, isolated me and broken my control of the movement.

But again they failed. Again the Union rose phoenix-like from its Government-wrought ruins. The line of control between Paris and London was never broken. Annie Kenney and I had foreseen the Government's intention and we were ready! At the moment of the former raid, Annie had come forward as chief organizer. Now there stepped into the breach another unexpected and powerful personality—Grace Roe! We had told her beforehand to be ready to follow Annie. With quiet courage she had accepted the dangerous post. It had been a hushed secret until then that she would take Annie's place. Not a breath of it must get out, or the enemy might hear and she would be arrested with Annie, instead of being free to replace her.

A little more than one year had Annie's reign as chief organizer lasted. She had carried a great burden of work and responsibility and faced continuous danger of arrest; yet she had never faltered. Every week-end and sometimes oftener, she had journeyed to Paris for concentrated discussion of plans. She had gloriously well done her hard and exacting work. Now another work, different but no less difficult, awaited her. She went to meet it without fear.

It was now the turn of Grace Roe. Ably and courageously she played her part. Gently bred, disarmingly amiable, and very young for a responsibility so great, she showed all the judgment, discretion, determination, and organizing power demanded in that contest with a Government of clever men, determined at all costs to defeat us. Her loyalty was complete! I wonder at it all on reviewing those militant years. Single-eyed concentration of strength and simplicity of life was largely the secret of what she did. Energy was not expended in side issues.

Mother wrote from her sick bed to her women, telling them to be calm:

'Be strong. Be faithful to one another, and to the Union, and all will be well.'

Grace was in command at headquarters. She and our splendid members, rallying as they always did, no matter what the Government's onslaughts might be, sent the wheels of the organization smoothly round again. The paper¹ appeared, meetings were held. Militant women were here, there, and everywhere throughout the country. Grace Roe's successor was appointed and in readiness, but we kept her identity a secret. Grace would be arrested eventually as Annie had been. She knew that well, but she went steadily on.

Annie and the General and all the Raid prisoners appeared at Bow Street. They were charged with 'having conspired with Mrs. Pankhurst, Miss Christabel Pankhurst and others' to cause damage to property.

Counsel for the prosecution said: 'Mrs. Pankhurst is not before the Court for excellent reasons. Miss Christabel Pankhurst has been for over a year a fugitive from justice, but actually supports the

¹ C. P. is here referring to *The Suffragette* which had become the organ of the W.S.P.U. after the severance from my wife and myself, who continued to bring out *Votes for Women*.—Ed.

work of the Union from the seclusion of Paris. Police finds at W.S.P.U. headquarters included,' he said, 'a large number of hammers and a letter suggesting that sneeze-producing powder should be spread in public gatherings.' He did not know, he solemnly said, whether this was the cause of a recent epidemic of sneezing at the Central Criminal Court. It wasn't, but the suggestion roused General Drummond's risibility and there was an epidemic of laughter in Court.

The General was then suddenly taken seriously ill, an operation was found urgently necessary and she disappeared from the trial. The others were tried at the Old Bailey on a conspiracy charge. With them was tried Mr. Edwyn Clayton, charged on the basis of a letter respecting some militant preparations. The police, when raiding the Kenneys' flat, had seized with other matters a book on the Bristol franchise riots, and in its pages this letter, which Jessie but for her ill-health at that time would have destroyed. Mr. and Mrs. Clayton were both generous and brave in this affair. Mr. Lansbury, it may here be noted, was sentenced to three months' imprisonment, but the Government did not apply the 'Cat and Mouse' Bill to him. He was a past and prospective M.P. with a political following among the electors.

Incautious words by the prosecution roused the newspapers in our defence on one important issue. They protested that counsel for the prosecution had threatened to suppress the newspaper *The Suffragette*. 'We know of no power in England by which a paper can be suppressed or "put a stop to",' said the *Manchester Guardian*. All through the troubles which the Government made for us we found some printer willing to print our paper.

The conspiracy prisoners were sentenced to be imprisoned from six months to twenty-one months and to be bound over for an additional twelve months which, in view of their principles, meant the addition of another full year's sentence of imprisonment. The judge spoke of them, and to them, in the severest terms and declared that if consulted he would advise that 'the ringleaders should not be let out of prison in any circumstances'. Annie said to him: 'Then we shall die together.'

The judge, being independent of the votes of the electorate and thus superior to political considerations, might dare that eventuality. But the Government could not afford to have six or seven prisoners dying all at once in prison. They did not, therefore, take the judge's

advice, and when the prisoners resorted to the hunger-strike they waited only until they reached the point of extreme weakness and released them under 'Cat and Mouse' licences—which, however, lasted only seven days!

In speaking of this hunger-strike Mother told of her anguish of mind as she thought of the hard fight before the Government would yield and of the bodily suffering of 'these nine terrible days, each longer and more increasingly miserable than the last'. At last 'a curious numbness and indifference seemed to come upon her' and it was 'almost without emotion' that she heard on the morning of the tenth day that she was to be released. The licence was read to her and she took it and tore it into shreds, saying: 'I have no intention of observing these conditions. You release me knowing perfectly well that I shall never voluntarily return to this place.' She was sent off in a cab, sitting bolt upright despite her weakness. As she passed through the prison gates she saw the W.S.P.U. members who had picketed the prison night and day during her stay there, a vigil which was thereafter maintained whenever she was in prison during her many hunger-strikes to come.

The Government kept a police watch to prevent Mother's escape. Two detectives and a constable were posted outside the door of the nursing home to which she went, others were in the offing, and two taxi-cabs were kept in readiness for pursuit. Persons emerging from the house were closely watched. However, Mother was next heard of in Norfolk Square, under the roof of the woman scientist, Mrs. Ayrton. The licence had expired four days when Dr. Flora Murray, who was attending Mother, received a notification from the Home Secretary that a warrant had been issued for the arrest of her patient. The police, accompanied by a medical inspector, arrived. After Mrs. Ayrton had examined the warrant they were admitted. The medical inspector of prisons, who had come in person, saw that Mother was too ill to be re-arrested and stated that the licence would be extended, but for how long remained unknown. Mother was then removed in an ambulance to the country to recuperate. The police saw her go but, having no instructions, did not arrest her. Dr. Flora Murray and Miss Pine, a trained nurse, accompanied her. From this time until the outbreak of war, when with Dr. Louisa Garrett Anderson she worked in hospitals for the wounded, Dr. Murray devoted herself to the medical care of Mother and of all our many prisoners. Miss Pine arranged to be always

with Mother to nurse her in the intervals between her 'Cat and Mouse' imprisonments.

Mother drove to the house of Dame Ethel Smyth at Woking, where she stayed for several days, a guard of police and detectives being posted to prevent her escape. A great W.S.P.U. meeting had been arranged and Mother announced that, weak as she was, she would speak. As she left the house she was arrested. In a half-fainting condition she entered the waiting motor-car, the detectives following. The W.S.P.U. chauffeur refused to obey their order to drive to Bow Street, so they transferred their prisoner to a cab. She was taken before the magistrate and committed to prison, though under the 'Cat and Mouse' licences this formality was not in future necessary. Mother declared to the magistrate her resolve to adopt the hunger-strike and to repeat it as many times as the Government should re-arrest her, until she died or until the concession of the vote. Five days she was kept, fasting, in prison, and then released for seven days and again taken to the nursing home.

The 'Cat and Mouse' policy failed from the beginning, though it was destined to bring great danger and suffering to Mother and many another Suffrage prisoner. Upon what else, we asked, could the Government depend as a barrier against votes for women! Added to 'Cat and Mouse' treatment the Government still used forcible feeding for some prisoners. A serious case was that of Phyllis Brady who, after five days' hunger-strike, was fed by force by nasal tube against her utmost resistance. A swollen nostril developed and still forcible feeding continued for days, causing agony. Once the tube got into her windpipe. Finally she was released.

The medical profession was stirred by the issue of forcible feeding. A meeting of doctors, under the presidency of Dr. Hugh Fenton, passed a resolution calling upon the Home Office no longer to require prison medical officers to act under the direction of lay authorities in professional matters and to abandon forcible feeding. The editor of the *British Medical Journal* said: 'Prison medical officers are faced with a divided duty, that which they owe to their patients and that which they owe to their official superiors, and the Home Office has no right to place them in this cruel dilemma.'

Our efforts were bent on keeping our women out of the clutches of the Government. Mrs. Brackenbury placed at our disposal her house in Campden Hill Square as a refuge. Known as 'Mouse Castle', this

house sheltered 'Cat and Mouse' prisoners during their illness, and from this stronghold they used to escape in many ingenious and courageous ways, in spite of the constant watch maintained by the police. One prisoner escaped in broad daylight when a crowd of women, dressed all alike, the one prisoner among them, suddenly rushed through the door and fled in all directions, the police on duty not knowing which to follow.

Carefully manufactured and, to us, rather amusing rumours were being circulated in the newspapers to the effect that there was a feeling in W.S.P.U. ranks in favour of dropping militancy; that it 'would be as well to call a truce, but unfortunately for the hopes of those who take this view it is feared that Miss Christabel Pankhurst has not the capacity for generalship necessary to understand the desirability of a dramatic change in tactics', or again: 'the real obstacle to such a truce is the obstinacy of Miss Christabel Pankhurst, who is expected to refuse assent to any abatement of militant activity until the vote is won or the movement is crushed'. 'Miss Pankhurst's hold over the rank and file is so strong,' we read, 'that the advocates of moderation do not care at the moment to risk a struggle with her, but it can be said that the advocates of a truce are ever watchful.' We laughed at this and we knew its source, outside, not inside, the W.S.P.U. Other rumours were tried. I was 'warned', indirectly, to leave France and go to some more remote country, as otherwise I should be expelled from France and find myself in England in the jaws of the enemy. As control of the movement would have been far more difficult in a more distant country, I declined to move. A more serious rumour of expulsion eventually reached me which, it was said, also reached Monsieur Poincaré, then President of the French Republic. His comment was, so it was said, that I should not be expelled, as this would be contrary to French tradition and international custom. Questions in our own House of Commons and in the Chamber of Deputies, as to whether I should be turned out of France and whether this had been requested by the British Government, were answered with a decorous negative.

Mother was ill from her second hunger-strike—or, more truly, her hunger-and-thirst-strike, for she had refused even water—and that barbarous 'Cat and Mouse' licence of one week had not yet expired, when there came with sudden shock the news of Emily Wilding Davison's historic act. She had stopped the King's horse at the Derby and was lying mortally injured. We were as startled as everyone else.

Not a word had she said of her purpose. Taking counsel with no one, she had gone to the race-course, waited her moment, and rushed forward. Horse and jockey were unhurt, but Emily Davison paid with her life for making the whole world understand that women were in earnest for the vote. Probably in no other way and at no other time and place could she so effectually have brought the concentrated attention of millions to bear upon the cause.

'Waiting there in the sun, in that gay scene, among that heedless crowd, she had in her soul the thought, the vision of wronged women. That thought she held to her; that vision she kept before her. Thus inspired, she threw herself into the fierce current of the race. So greatly did she care for freedom that she died for it. That is the verdict given at the great Inquest of the Nation on the death of Emily Wilding Davison.' So said our obituary tribute.

There was a great funeral procession. A poignant happening of the day was the Government's re-arrest of Mother as she was on her way to the funeral. 'The Government have decreed,' she said, 'that I may not join with members and friends in paying a last tribute of reverent gratitude to our dear comrade Emily Davison. I return to prison to resume the hunger-strike and I shall do my utmost worthily to uphold the standard of revolt against the political and moral enslavement of women.' Forty-eight hours after Mother's enforced return to Holloway they had to release her, so ill was she. Yet again the licence was only for seven days.

Another long sentence was now imposed upon two militants charged with burning down the Grand Stand at Hurst Park race-course. Three years' penal servitude for a race stand was, we argued, in strange contrast to the short terms of imprisonment often given for offences against human beings! In the eye of the politicians, and even in the eye of the law, property seemed more precious than persons.

All Suffragette prisoners were refusing food as a protest against being condemned to prison instead of being admitted to citizenship. They were tempted to eat, not by the regulation diet, but by delicacies otherwise not usual in prison! One starving prisoner reported: 'The doctor offered me anything I could fancy—from champagne downwards, and all kinds of dainty food were placed in my cell, beautifully cooked and very tempting, chicken, fish, custard pudding, fruit, etc.' An involuntary tribute to our prisoners was made by the Government in an inspired statement which appeared in the Press: 'The difference

between the treatment of Suffrage prisoners and other criminals who hunger-strike is a psychological one. The moral attitude of resistance to the law has a great deal to do with the power of effectual resistance to food and although cases have been known in which ordinary criminals have for a time adopted the hunger-strike, there is no single instance in which it has been maintained with the stubbornness of the Suffrage prisoners. In official circles no fear is entertained of any attempt at systematic hunger-strikes among ordinary prisoners. The average prisoner values his life and his health too highly to risk either by quarrelling with his food.' What an admission this was of the heroism of the many women—in numbers now almost past counting—who risked health and life for the vote!

Another inspired statement had it that the 'Cat and Mouse' Act was succeeding, that the number of militant acts was decreasing, that some Suffragettes released under the Act had escaped, but in each case had left the United Kingdom. All this was untrue. Militant acts continued as before, or rather, increased in number and strength, and while the 'mice' prisoners were hard to find, once they were released they did not leave the country, unless for a rest and change, but aimed at renewing the fight when health was restored. Mother and others who attempted to speak on the public platform were, of course, all too easily re-arrested.

Militancy rose to a high pitch during this final period of the struggle, which opened with the Government's first raid in March 1912, and ended with the Women's Armistice at the beginning of the Great War.

Mother and Annie Kenney, both under the menace of 'Cat and Mouse' re-arrest, decided to attend a large afternoon meeting of the W.S.P.U. in order, as we said afterwards, 'to assert their right to be free, as Sir Edward Carson and Mr. Bonar Law, militants in the cause of Ulster, are free'.

Thriftily conserving her 'Cat and Mouse' licence, Annie had brought it to the platform and now sold it for the benefit of the W.S.P.U. campaign fund. The Government, she said, could never break the spirit of their Suffrage prisoners, and though some might die under coercion the movement would go on. The chairman was speaking affectionately of Mother and reminding the audience that this was her birthday, when Mother herself appeared. The joy and acclamation that greeted her can be imagined. When calm was restored Mother said: 'It is a little more than three months since I last stood

on this platform on the eve of my Old Bailey trial at which I was sent to three years' penal servitude. Sir Edward Carson is a rebel, as I am. He told us so in Ulster a few days ago. Yet he is at liberty, while I am a felon, but I and all other women have a justification that no man rebels can have, for we, being voteless, have no constitutional means whatever for the redress of our grievance. I wondered as I drove here if I should find physical strength to speak to you, because during these last three months I have experienced the tender mercies of the Liberal Government in their effort to coerce women. But I thought to myself, at any rate I must say one thing—that a defiant deed has greater value than innumerable thousands of words—and I determined that even if I were arrested and taken back to Holloway from the door of this meeting, I would do my defiant deed and be with you here.'

Police reinforcements had been sent from Scotland Yard and a strong force was waiting at the doors. Annie was seized and a great struggle ensued, as men and women in the audience tried to rescue her. But the police prevailed and drove her to Holloway Prison. Mother, most fortunately, passed unnoticed through the thick of the crowd and got quietly and safely away to the apartment of one of our members in Great Smith Street, Westminster.

All this time arrests and trials of militants were taking place in London and other parts of the country. The present¹ Viscountess Rhondda was arrested in Wales for a letter-box protest but arrests were now relatively few. Our women were much more careful now than in the early militant days for they were chiefly bent upon responding to the challenge given by Cabinet Ministers and upon fulfilling the condition of success which Ministers had laid down. They had discovered by experience that the suffering of women militants would not be the decisive factor in winning the vote. That had been proved by the enactment of the 'Cat and Mouse' Act, by a majority of the members of each political party in the House of Commons, and by the tolerance during those already long years of forcible feeding. Militancy, to be effective, must not merely hurt and endanger the lives of the women themselves; it must, at the very least, produce intense inconvenience and even a certain alarm to the Government.

The next big W.S.P.U. meeting saw Mother and Annie again on the platform. Annie could not be re-arrested, because the licence issued after her recent arrest, followed by a hunger-strike and further release,

¹ She died in 1958.—Ed.



Courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery

Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst



Arrest of Mary Richardson



Arrest of Grace Roe

had not yet expired! Mother was liable to re-arrest. Already the police had been on the watch in Great Smith Street, to arrest her should she leave her flat. Already they had arrested a veiled lady who, accompanied by several other persons, had emerged from the building and, after a fight in the street, had driven away with her in a cab for Holloway. But when she at last lifted her veil she proved not to be Mrs. Pankhurst after all! They had rushed back to their post, but they were too late. The real Mrs. Pankhurst had gone. Thus she was able to reach the meeting. But as she was moving through the audience towards the platform a detective seized her by the arm and pulled her towards the door. 'Women, they are arresting me!' Mother cried. They rose to her aid. More detectives appeared and a terrific struggle followed. There were cries of pain as women were almost crushed. Some sustained severe blows. Police arrived in great force, while Mother and some of those defending her were gradually isolated from the main body. All lights were turned off and in the semi-darkness the police were more easily able to drag Mother from the hall and take her to prison again. Arrests were made of a certain number of those who had defended her. Annie then appeared on the platform—she was very weak but insisted on standing to speak, because that was 'more defiant'—and the gathering resolved itself into an indignation meeting.

Militancy continued and property paid the price of the Government's work that day. The Prime Minister visited Birmingham where Suffragettes besieged his hotel and a guest at the Chamber of Commerce Dinner challenged him on the question of the 'Cat and Mouse' Act' and the denial of votes to women.

Again Mother and Annie appeared on the platform. Mother was just released after a hunger-and-thirst-strike and had to be wheeled to the platform in an invalid chair. Her licence of seven days was sold for £100 to swell the campaign funds. Pale and enfeebled, Mother said: 'I believe that the end of our struggle is in sight—but it is not yet here and we have to continue it to the end. If we of the Women's Social and Political Union, the vanguard of the women's army and its fighting force, were to relax our efforts, the movement for the vote would go back to where it started. We who are fighting this battle will continue it, no matter what comes to ourselves, until the victory is ours.'

The police were waiting outside to arrest Annie, and, after a desperate struggle in which the tyres of the cab hired by the police were cut and several arrests were made, she was placed in a second cab and

taken to prison. Another hunger-strike—another release—another meeting! Last time she had got into the hall disguised as a very old lady, but the police were now forewarned and might see through the cleverest disguise. The meeting was held in the London Pavilion, and this suggested a plan. A large hamper such as an actress would use was procured. Annie crouched inside. It was suitably labelled and delivered at the Pavilion! Annie was on the platform and spoke! Afterwards she was again arrested and imprisoned. She suffered much in prison and was delirious. She was released on an eight-days' licence. Mother, also released on licence, went, after it had expired, to a large W.S.P.U. meeting, and for once was not re-arrested. 'We trust that this means the end of the attempt to break the spirit of women by "Cat and Mouse" torture,' was our comment. Alas! it meant no such thing. The 'Cat and Mouse' system, accompanied in many cases by forcible feeding, was only at its beginning.

Parliament having dispersed for the summer holiday, after an ill-spent Session, whose chief exploit was the passing of the 'Cat and Mouse' Act, Mother and the others who had suffered under the Act decided also to take a holiday.

It was officially announced by the W.S.P.U. that 'Mrs. Pankhurst has, by the advice of her doctor, left England to take a cure in order to recover from the effects of her experience under the "Cat and Mouse" Act. She will return in due course to resume her work for the movement as before.'

Just before Parliament rose, the Attorney-General had vouchsafed an official excuse for the imprisonment of Mrs. Pankhurst and the freedom of Sir Edward Carson. This excuse was that Mrs. Pankhurst's words had led to the commission of deeds and Sir Edward Carson's words had not. But what of the recent rioting in Derry, we asked, when shots were actually fired?

The Government did not order Mrs. Pankhurst's arrest on her return to England, even though she spoke at two meetings, and she decided during this lull in the fight to make another visit to America, giving herself the benefit of two restful voyages and the relative repose of speaking in full security from re-arrest. She knew well that her suffering was destined to be renewed and that all her reserves of strength would be needed.

America's welcome to Mother was thus expressed in a New York daily newspaper: 'Mrs. Pankhurst has proved by her own courage and her own arts the folly of those who object to Woman's Suffrage. They said that women ought not to have the vote because they had not the courage to go to war. Mrs. Pankhurst showed them that she had the courage to go to gaol. When she came out of gaol, too feeble to walk, she had the courage—splendid, moral, spiritual courage—to continue her fight for women's rights and her denunciation of injustice.'

Rumour then began that Mother would be refused admission to the United States. The American women prepared to act in that event. They began to organize a vast meeting of welcome in Madison Square Garden. 'To refuse Mrs. Pankhurst entry would be to hold up America to scorn and ridicule,' said a woman lawyer. 'Mrs. Pankhurst is in the same class with our revolutionary heroes, with Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln.'

The American Suffragists stated that they were prepared, if necessary, to carry the matter to the Supreme Court of the United States.

After some quiet weeks in France, during which she and I had concerted future plans, Mother sailed from Havre to New York early in October.

'Held up at Ellis Island!' 'Indignation in the United States.' 'President Intervenes.' 'Extraordinary Welcome in New York.' These headlines sum up the history of what happened at the other end of her voyage. The immigration officers asked Mother whether she had been to prison. 'Yes, many times,' she answered. She had been admitted, though an ex-prisoner, on previous occasions. This time she was refused admittance.

The affair caused an immense stir. American Suffragists bestirred themselves. The greatest sympathy was expressed by the American public. President Wilson intervened and in conference with the Government department concerned decided that Mother should be admitted. Mother had, of course, a magnificent reception in New York and in the many other cities in which she spoke. The financial fruits of her tour, £4,500, she gave to the W.S.P.U. campaign fund.

Here is Mother's own account of her return:

'The night before the White Star liner *Majestic* reached Plymouth, a wireless message from our headquarters informed me that the Government had decided to arrest me on my arrival. The arrest was made under very dramatic conditions the next day, shortly before

noon. The steamer came to anchor in the outer harbour and we saw at once that the bay, usually so animated, had been cleared of all craft. Far in the distance the tender, which on other occasions had always met the steamer, rested at anchor between two huge grey warships. For a moment or two the scene halted, the passengers crowding to the deck rails to see what was to happen next. Suddenly a fisherman's boat, power-driven, dashed across the harbour, directly under the noses of the grim war vessels. Two women, spray-drenched, stood up in the boat and as it ploughed swiftly past our steamer the women called out to me: "The Cats are here, Mrs. Pankhurst! They're close on you . . ." Their voices trailed away into the mist and we heard no more. Within a minute or two, a frightened ship's boy appeared on deck and delivered a message from the purser, asking me to step down to his office. I answered that I could certainly do nothing of the kind. Next the police swarmed out on deck and I heard for the fifth time that I was arrested under the "Cat and Mouse" Act. They had sent five men from Scotland Yard, two men from Plymouth and a wardress from Holloway, a sufficient number, it will be allowed, to take one woman from a ship anchored out at sea. Following my firm resolve not to assist in any way the enforcing of this infamous coercion law, I refused to go with the police, who thereupon carried me to the waiting police tender. We steamed some miles up the Cornish coast, the men refusing to tell me whither they were conveying me, and finally disembarked at Bull Point, a Government landing-stage, closed to the general public. Here a motor-car was waiting and accompanied by the police from Scotland Yard and the matron from Holloway, I was driven across Dartmoor to Exeter where I had a not unendurable imprisonment and a hunger-strike of four days. Everyone, from the Governor of the prison to the wardresses, was openly sympathetic and kind and I was told by one confidential official that they had kept me only because they had orders to keep me until after the great W.S.P.U. meeting in London which had been arranged to welcome me home. The meeting was held on the night following my arrest and the imposing sum of £15,000 was poured into the coffers, which included the £4,500 which had been collected during my American tour.

"Several days after my release from Exeter Gaol, I went openly to Paris to consult with my daughter on matters relating to the campaign, returning to London to attend a W.S.P.U. meeting on the day before my licence expired. Nevertheless, the boat-train compartment in which

I travelled with my doctor and nurse was invaded at Dover Town by two detectives who told me to consider myself under arrest. We were having tea when the men entered, but this we immediately threw out of the window, because a hunger-strike always began at the moment of arrest. We never compromised at all, but resisted from the very first moment of attack. The reason for this unwarranted arrest at Dover was fear of the bodyguard of women, organized for the express purpose of resisting attempts to arrest me. Knowing that the bodyguard was waiting at Victoria Station, the authorities had cut off all approaches to the arrival platform and the place was guarded by battalions of police. Not a passenger was allowed to leave the train until I had been carried across the arrival platform between a double line of police and detectives and placed in a car guarded within by two plain-clothes men and a wardress and without by three more policemen. Round the motor-car were taxi-cabs filled with police. Arrived at Holloway, I was lifted from the car and taken to the reception-room and placed on the floor in a state of great exhaustion. When the doctor entered I refused to be examined, saying that I was determined to make the Government assume full responsibility for my condition. Wardresses were summoned. I was placed in an invalid chair and carried up three flights of stairs and placed in a cell. Refusing to leave the chair, I was lifted and placed on the bed where I lay all night without removing my coat or loosening my garments. The arrest was made on Saturday and I was kept in prison until the following Wednesday morning. During all this time no food or water passed my lips and I added to this the sleep-strike. For two nights I sat or lay on the concrete floor, resolutely refusing the repeated offers of medical examination. On Tuesday morning the Governor came to look at me and no doubt I presented a bad appearance. At least I gathered as much from the alarmed expression of the wardresses who accompanied him. To the Governor I made the simple statement that I was ready to leave prison very soon, dead or alive. I told him that from that moment I should not even rest on the concrete floor, but should walk my cell until I was released or until I died from exhaustion. All day I kept to this resolution, pacing up and down the narrow cell, many times stumbling and falling until the doctor came in at evening to tell me that I was ordered to be released the following morning. Then I loosened my gown and fell almost instantly into a deathlike sleep. The next morning a motor ambulance took me to our Kingsway

headquarters, where a hospital room had been arranged for me. The two imprisonments in ten days had made terrible drafts on my strength.'

The arrests at Plymouth and Dover provoked a new outbreak of militancy. A timber yard and other property at Devonport were burnt, and though those concerned in the affair were never found, they left two cards inscribed 'How dare you arrest Mrs. Pankhurst and let Sir Edward Carson and Mr. Bonar Law go free', and 'Our reply to the torture of Mrs. Pankhurst and her cowardly arrest at Plymouth'.

Women's militancy had been the dominant fact of the expiring year. In his Christmastide sermon the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke of the 'general bewilderment wherewith impatient zeal has tangled the whole question of the due apportionment to manhood and womanhood of our joint trust for the common good'. Our zeal we admitted, but no undue impatience.

The women's war for the vote, though it had in one year caused a vast destruction of property valued at more than half a million pounds, had done no bodily injury to the enemy or to onlookers. Only the women had been hurt. Emily Davison had lost her life in a deed of great daring and self-devotion. Other of our women had died unnoticed by the world, but honoured and mourned by their colleagues, who knew them to have been in truth victims of the struggle. Mother and her fellow prisoners had been persecuted by the Government. Nevertheless, Mother and her militants were in good heart and unbroken in spirit at the close of this year. Militancy was full of danger and pain for women. As 1914 dawned, Mother, like Garibaldi in his day, and to adapt his words, offered to herself and to her followers insult and abuse and pain and loneliness and loss of friends and the anger of politicians.

Yet, like Garibaldi also, she said: 'Let her who takes this cause in her heart and not with her lips only, follow me!'

One other thing she could promise. It was final victory.

1914—Last Year of Militancy

Ulster's Example—Anarchy—'Raided Again'—Another Conspiracy Trial—Tempering the Steel

A DEPUTATION to the King!

This was our first thought for 1914. We awaited the re-opening of Parliament to know whether the Government's programme for the new Session would include votes for women before making our formal request to send the deputation.

Those other militants, Sir Edward Carson and the rest, were more defiant than ever. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, then very near the end of his days, had just advised them to 'fight it out'. Sir Edward Carson said they assuredly would! Women were being brought into the Ulster scheme of things militant and no one seemed to complain! Women, it appeared, could be rightly militant in any cause but votes for women!

The *Daily Telegraph* paid a great tribute to the women of Ulster and also to 'the Boer' women in the South African War, whose tactics imposed upon the British generals the cruel necessity of burning the scattered farms of the burghers. We saw from this that burning houses was, in men's eyes, quite justified in the cause of votes for men in South Africa, the issue out of which the Boer War had developed, and that militancy on the part of women was admired by men, provided that women were militant for a cause directly affecting men and not in a cause directly affecting women only.

Forcible feeding was one of the great issues of 1914. This 'most objectionable practice', to cite Mr. McKenna's own admission, was applied in addition to and in conjunction with 'Cat and Mouse' treatment. The Church of England and the Free Churches were approached on the subject. Leading medical organs, in growing numbers, condemned the practice.

'The deputation to the King is the best step you have taken,' wrote

our members. 'To none will we deny, to none delay, right of justice,' is the Royal promise in the Magna Carta.

Historic precedents were set forth by a learned Suffragette, Miss F. E. Macaulay, of the same family as the historian of that name. Constitutional law also warranted women's claim to petition the King in person.

The King's Speech at the new Session of Parliament gave no hint of any concession of the vote, but made conciliatory reference to the Ulster issue. Mr. Asquith, in the House of Commons, indicated that the Government had concessions to make 'for the sake of peace and as the price of peace'. What a triumph that was for Ulster militancy!

Mother who had been in Paris left when Parliament reassembled. The most painful phase of the long conflict awaited her and she knew it. It was hard to re-enter the arena of battle, to face again the arrests with all their violence, the sombre drives to Holloway, the prison cell, the days of hunger and thirst and the illness following, the tension of the licence times, with re-arrest to follow.

The women's bodyguard, enrolled to protect Mother from arrest and violence, was in readiness. When she reached 'Mouse Castle', the bodyguard was there to welcome her. What a haven that roomy house afforded! There our prisoners found shelter, comfort, and the medical care and nursing they so sadly needed after their prison ordeal; there they regained strength for the ordeals to come. Now the bodyguard were housed there too.

'Mrs. Pankhurst, who has returned to England, in order to resume her work for the vote, has taken up her residence in Campden Hill Square, where she will address a public open-air meeting tonight at 8.30.' This announcement was sent to the Press and a vast and sympathetic crowd assembled. Mother appeared at an open window and was received with a great outburst of cheering from the thousands assembled below. She spoke for almost half an hour in that voice that, in an effortless way, carried so far. She appealed to all to help to get the Suffrage question dealt with. To her followers she said: 'Even if they kill you and me, victory is assured.' Announcing her intention of leaving the house and coming among the people, Mother challenged the Government to re-arrest her and feed her by force, as they were forcibly feeding her followers. Then she left the window and was seen emerging from the house, surrounded by her bodyguard. The police, present in large numbers, rushed forward. There was resistance and a

fierce struggle before an arrest was made. At the police station the police handed over their captive. 'It isn't Mrs. Pankhurst!' they were told. They had arrested one of our members instead!

This member later made this sworn declaration: 'I heard them say: "There she is, there's Mrs. Pankhurst, come on all of you." In one moment I was nearly stunned by a blow over the back of my head and the next moment I was thrown violently to the ground while men knelt or sat down roughly on my back, so that I felt as if my ribs were cracking and all the breath going out of my body. I remember groaning out: "God have mercy upon me," and thinking my last moment had come. How glad I was that it wasn't Mrs. Pankhurst! The surge of the crowd and the trampling of feet all round and over our bodies seemed tremendous. I knew nothing more and think I must have been unconscious when they dragged me up. Then I began to be aware of voices and heard: "They have killed Mrs. Pankhurst." Someone said: "They have got the wrong woman," and the detectives, who were on either side of me, began arguing as to whether I was or was not Mrs. Pankhurst. I heard them say: "Let's get her to the police station first." A grey-headed man who was, I believe, Inspector — of Scotland Yard, threw open the door of the room into which they had put me, looked angrily at me and said furiously: "No it isn't," and slammed the door. Then I heard a great altercation going on outside.'

The next news of Mrs. Pankhurst was that she would address an open-air meeting on a Saturday afternoon from a balcony in Glebe Place, Chelsea. Thither she had gone to stay with friends, after the meeting in Campden Hill Square. Again a great multitude assembled to hear her. Again the police were there to arrest her, should she leave the house. The meeting ended. In a few moments both the house door and a garden gate opened and a crowd of women poured out. The police surrounded them; there was a struggle and two women were arrested. The police resumed their watch upon the house, by night and day. Then quite late one night, when two detectives were on the doorstep and others within call, three taxi-cabs drove to the house and several women jumped out and dashed to the house door, through which suddenly came a number of other women. Here was the body-guard! Whistles blew and police seemed to spring from the earth. The police drew their truncheons. The bodyguard produced Indian clubs. The police, knowing a rescue was intended, made a fight. The body-guard fought too, and while they held the police at bay, Mother quietly

passed through the door, entered a taxi-cab and drove away. One inspector caught sight of her and tried to stop her, but he was firmly seized and his headgear pushed over his eyes. 'Most of the police,' it was reported, 'were so busy defending themselves that they entirely forgot Mrs. Pankhurst.'

Mother's next action was to write to the King, appealing to be heard by him in person.

This letter was answered by Mr. McKenna, who, as Home Secretary, wrote that he had 'laid her petition before the King' but 'regretted that he had been unable to advise His Majesty to comply with the prayer thereof'.

Mother wrote a second letter to the King in which she said that women 'utterly denied the constitutional right of Ministers, who are not elected by women, to stand between themselves and the Throne and to prevent them having audience of Your Majesty'.

Militancy was rapidly winning its victory in the affair of Ulster. The Prime Minister was admitting that 'the immediate inclusion of Ulster in the Home Rule Bill has all the drawbacks and dangers incident to *any scheme which has to be coercively enforced*'! Powerful words as a justification of Suffrage militancy; yet there was much still for women to suffer before their victory.

Scotland was awaiting a visit from Mother. In St. Andrew's Hall, Glasgow, 5,000 men and women had assembled to acclaim her. The building was surrounded by police, instructed to arrest her as she entered the meeting. Somehow she got to the platform. 'I have kept my promise,' she said, 'and in spite of His Majesty's Government I am here tonight. Today, in the House of Commons, has been witnessed the triumph of men's militancy [a reference to the Government's evident disposition to yield to Ulster], and I hope to make it clear to this meeting that if it is justifiable to fight for ordinary equal justice, then women have ample justification for——'

Suddenly a warning cry from a steward! Then a tramp of feet and the police in large numbers burst into the hall and rushed to the platform, drawing their truncheons. The women's bodyguard and members of the audience resisted the police. A barbed-wire entanglement had been prudently placed as a barrier beneath the flowers and bunting. Missiles were thrown and chairs brandished to hold the police back, in the hope of enabling Mother to get away, but the police laid about them with their batons and additional police were invading the hall

and blocking exits through which she might pass. At last, after an intense struggle, she was arrested and taken to the train bound for London. The police then tried to clear the hall, but the indignant audience refused to leave and a protest meeting was held, addressed by Lady Isabel Margesson, Mrs. Drummond, and Miss Barbara Wylie. The stations at which the train stopped were guarded by police, and at Euston police precautions were evident. Mother was taken back to Holloway Prison, considerably hurt in the struggle and utterly weary from the whole experience. In Edinburgh, where she was to have spoken the following night, a great protest meeting was held in the Synod Hall.

Indignation moved one of her followers, Miss Mary Richardson, to an act which made a great sensation—the attack on a picture, the ‘Rokeby Venus’. She paid dearly by forcible feeding in prison. ‘I thought over my act very seriously before I undertook it,’ she said in Court. ‘I have been a student of art and I suppose care as much for art as anyone in the gallery that morning. But I care more for justice.’ The prosecution had characterized her act as an ‘outrage’, but she held that the Government’s treatment of Mrs. Pankhurst was ‘an ultimatum of outrages. It is slow murder’. The judge remarked that if the picture had been destroyed (it was not) no money could have replaced it. ‘No money under the sun could replace Mrs. Pankhurst,’ said Miss Richardson.

Scotland was still deeply stirred by the St. Andrew’s Hall arrest and by the forcible feeding in Calton Gaol of a Suffragette, who had to be released suffering from double pneumonia. The Leith by-election turned strongly against the Government.

Mr. Lloyd George, at a public meeting at Huddersfield, now made a highly interesting remark which showed that we had much to gain from a change of Government. ‘I have deprecated as much as any man the breach of the law by people who are fighting for the franchise for women,’ he said. ‘But I ask in all seriousness: If Mr. Bonar Law ever comes into power what moral right will he have to punish these people for breaches of the law?’ ‘What moral right,’ we asked, ‘had the Government, to which Mr. Lloyd George belonged, to punish militant women for breaches of the law, when they were not punishing Mr. Bonar Law and Sir Edward Carson? It was evident,’ we said, ‘that if a Conservative Government came into power, Mr. Lloyd George and his Liberal colleagues, although they had not forborne to imprison, and “Cat and Mouse”, and forcibly feed women, rather than give

them the vote, would raise a great protest against a Conservative Government who did so.' We militants, therefore, were living in hopeful expectancy of a General Election, not too long delayed.

We noticed that although the Government were advising the King not to intervene in the woman suffrage question, nor to see Mrs. Pankhurst and her deputation, they *were* advising him to intervene in the Ulster affair and to discuss the Ulster question with such non-Ministerial persons as Lord Roberts, who was militantly disposed in his support of Ulster's position. Mr. Asquith, when in attendance at Balmoral, had, it appeared, sought the King's approval for private negotiation with that arch-militant Sir Edward Carson, with a view to peace with Ulster.

Mother, after another hunger-and-thirst-strike, had, under a short licence, been released again, still bearing the marks of the Glasgow struggle and arrest.

The Government for some time had prohibited our meetings in Hyde Park. When Sir Edward Carson and other Ulsterites announced a meeting there, we acted! This manifesto was issued:

FREE SPEECH AND FAIR PLAY

The women who are fighting for the vote have, by a so-called Liberal Government, been refused the right of meeting in Hyde Park. Suddenly we see from announcements in the Press that the men who are preparing to fight Home Rule by methods far more violent than the methods of militant women, have permission to hold a Hyde Park meeting next Saturday, April 4th.

This being so, the women have applied to the Government to remove the veto on their meetings.

The Government have refused.

This unjust refusal the women have declined to accept and they will hold a Procession and Hyde Park Demonstration, at the same time that the Ulster men are holding theirs.

If men are allowed to preach militancy and protest against the coercion of men militants, women have an equal right to preach militancy and protest against the coercion of women militants. If men militants can hold meetings in Hyde Park, women militants will hold meetings in Hyde Park.

Citizens of London! Come to Hyde Park next Sunday to protest against the Government's policy of refusing to give Fair Play and Free Speech to women.

Quite a lengthy correspondence with Scotland Yard and the Office of Works ensued. Finally the prohibition took the form of refusing a permit to take a vehicle across the grass to serve as a platform. We objected to this. A steady platform such as a lorry was needful to assure the safety of speakers when a very large audience assembled, and we demanded the facilities accorded to men militants speaking for Ulster.

General Drummond and Miss Phyllis Ayrton were the speakers in Hyde Park and spoke from a lorry platform. In the end the police took possession of the platform and arrested Mrs. Drummond. 'General Flora Drummond,' said the W.S.P.U., 'has been arrested in Hyde Park, under the very eyes of Mr. Arthur Balfour, Sir Edward Carson and Mr. Austen Chamberlain—militant leaders who were speaking in defence of a policy more violent and dangerous than that which General Drummond was seeking to uphold.'

To the younger post-war women, who cannot remember these days, it will seem difficult to believe in such discrimination. Mrs. Pankhurst had made militancy and law-breaking for political ends positively respectable and even fashionable. These men militants gained in consequence, not simply in immunity from prosecution, but also in the easy public acceptance of their militant words and ways, which that eminent lawyer, Sir Edward Carson, himself admitted had already far overrun the bounds of legality. Counsel's opinion, that is the opinion of Sir Edward Carson himself, was that Carson the militant was a law-breaker, and liable to the same penalties as Mrs. Pankhurst.

Mrs. Pankhurst, in her motherly and leaderly way, was acutely distressed by the forcible feeding of her followers. She publicly challenged the Government to cease the forced feeding of her fellow prisoners or forcibly to feed her. They did not forcibly feed her—for their one great fear, as appears from Lord Crewe's statement in the House of Lords and from the disclosures in the late Lord Riddell's *Diary*, was that Mother would die in prison. Her death, they believed, would be visited upon themselves and her restraining influence would be no more.

Mother was too ill to go to Lowestoft to address a mass meeting arranged by the W.S.P.U. to coincide with the conference of the National Union of Teachers. Annie Kenney resolved to represent her. How could she get there, with detectives constantly watching the

house in Campden Hill Square, like 'cats' at a 'mouse-hole'? Neighbours were friendly. In a black bathing-suit, black cap, stockings, long gloves and a mask, Annie crept at midnight from 'Mouse Castle', climbed a wall into the neighbour's garden and entered their house. Next morning, well disguised, she drove away with members of the family. Changing from cab to cab, she broke all clues and drove by night to Lowestoft. In fresh disguise, and leading by the hand another Suffragette, dressed as a schoolgirl, she entered the Lowestoft Hippodrome, where teachers from all over the country were assembling. The police were at the doors, looking for Mother who, according to orders, was to be arrested before she could speak. Annie slipped into the speakers' room, removed her coat, changed her hat, and was ready for the platform! The great gathering of teachers was afire with enthusiasm, when they found that one of the Suffragette mice had thus foiled the Government cat. Cheers for Mrs. Pankhurst, cheers for Annie Kenney, 'raised the roof'. Annie spoke. Then, while the meeting was still in progress and the chairman, Lady Isabel Margesson, was saying a closing word, she slipped behind the scenes and passed out of the hall amid the dispersing crowd and was safely away.

Ubiquity, thy name is Suffragette! Our women were everywhere. They were at every public gathering, political or otherwise, calling upon the citizens of every sort and degree to remember votes for women and rescue from coercion the women rightly struggling to be politically free. Theatres and restaurants were visited by Suffragettes, with printed leaflets. Picture galleries, museums, and historic buildings were as far as possible shut and Americans and visitors from the Dominions, desiring to see art treasures and historic buildings, found this impossible 'because of the Suffragettes'. This was wonderful propaganda, for it made the disappointed sightseers think more deeply than before on the matter of votes for women. Often do I meet smiling persons who say: 'I remember those days, when I could not visit this or that gallery.' The memory of it makes them feel that they too had a part in making history. So they had! Their protests at the time meant all the more pressure brought to bear on the Liberal Government.

'I am not particularly anxious to see her,' were the words of a magistrate when informed that an accused Suffragette was missing and would not appear for trial. Judges and magistrates were getting very tired of trying and sentencing Suffragettes. They hated the whole thing. They had endeavoured to persuade and compel the women to

give in and they had failed. Their only remaining hope was that the Government would give in. The judges and magistrates were becoming more and more a force on our side.

Gun-running was the next sensation. Not Suffragette gun-running, for we utterly disapproved of guns as political arguments, but Ulster gun-running!

The papers were full of it. The whole country rang with it. Questions in Parliament asked: 'What steps do the Government propose to take?'

'In view of this grave and unprecedented outrage, the House may be assured that His Majesty's Government will take without delay appropriate steps to vindicate the authority of the law,' said the Prime Minister gravely and sternly. But he meant not a word of it. His 'steps' and 'vindication of the law' were only for women.

The Treason Felony Act had been broken by Sir Edward Carson, insisted another member of the Government, Mr. Winston Churchill—but Sir Edward Carson remained perfectly free to commit treason and felony.

The influential Liberal organ, the *Westminster Gazette*, admitted that the Unionist Party's militant Ulster doctrine was 'on all fours with Mrs. Pankhurst's'. Another Liberal newspaper, the *Daily Chronicle*, said: 'The Carsonites have already done things for which ordinary persons receive sentences of hard labour or penal servitude. . . . It is not a spirit of pedantry that resents the glaring difference between the treatment of them and other less privileged offenders.'

A Unionist call for justice and fair play was heard when Lord Willoughby de Brooke, in the House of Lords, laid the blame of Suffragette militancy upon the shoulders of the Government, whose treatment of the women was, he said, lowering our country in the eyes of the world, and urged the Unionist Party to take up the cause of votes for women. Lord Lytton and the Bishop of London supported him. The last named proclaimed himself a convert to votes for women and said that he could not understand how those who sympathized with Ulster's opposition to Home Rule could refuse their sympathy to women's opposition to disfranchisement.

Punch published a cartoon showing the Royal Academy pictures on the line totally obscured by rows of police, an allusion to militant attentions to the portrait of the Duke of Wellington who, having had his windows broken in the cause of votes for men some eighty years

before, now had his portrait marked in the cause of votes for women.

Mrs. Pankhurst's message regarding the deputation to the King was now published.

On the 21st of May [it ran] a deputation of members of the W.S.P.U. will wait upon His Majesty the King in order to lay before him reasons why he should assist his women-subjects in their struggle for political freedom.

The right to petition the reigning monarch is the oldest of all political rights. It is the only political right that women have in Great Britain.

We who now intend to exercise it, do so because the needs of women are very urgent and the welfare of our country depends upon the immediate granting of our demands for enfranchisement.

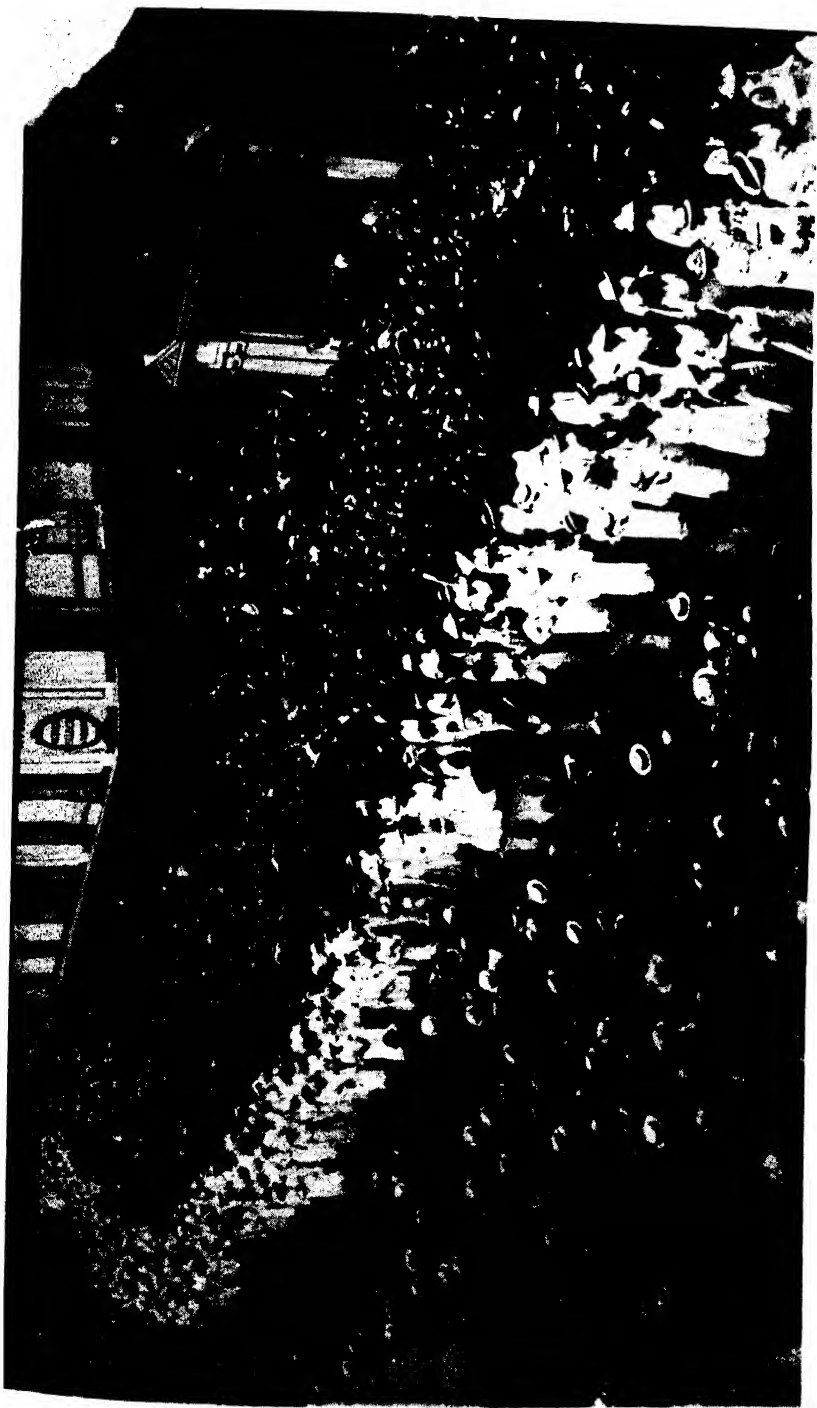
May the spirit that animated those who fought for liberty in the past, animate us with courage to do our duty. . . .

E. PANKHURST

The Prime Minister was asked in the House of Commons by a Liberal Member, Mr. Pratt, whether, in view of the decision of the Government not to take criminal proceedings against the persons involved in the recent illegal importation of arms into Ulster, a similar attitude is not to be adopted towards women charged with lawlessness in pursuit of political ends. The Prime Minister did not think the two cases were parallel!

For breaking a shop window Sylvia was sentenced to two months' imprisonment and, with her fellow prisoner, Zelig Emerson, was forcibly fed after a hunger-and-thirst-strike. Sylvia's account of her experience was published in the Press on her release after several days. She told of the steel gag that cut her mouth, of the half-dozen wardresses that held her down, of the two doctors who performed the torturing process of forcible feeding, of the retching and sickness, of her twenty-eight-hours' continuous pacing of her cell, that she might the sooner defeat the Government's purpose. Publicly, the Government would not admit the case, she stated; privately, the Home Secretary admitted her immense courage. Sylvia was not again forcibly fed, but like Mother, Annie Kenney, and some others, she was made subject to many re-arrests under the 'Cat and Mouse' Act. Forcible feeding, however, continued in other cases and did not cease until the Great War had begun.

General Drummond and Mrs. Dacre Fox were arrested, one on



Funeral of Emily Wilding Davison



Mrs. Pankhurst's statue in Victoria Tower Gardens

the doorstep of Lord Lansdowne and the other on the doorstep of Sir Edward Carson, whither they had gone to seek advice and protection from these fellow militants.

'I have come to take refuge with you, as you yourself have delivered several speeches endorsing and inciting to violent resistance to Home Rule and yet the Government do not attack you. I am confident, therefore, that under your roof I shall have the same immunity from arrest and imprisonment that you yourself enjoy.' So wrote Mrs. Dacre Fox to Lord Lansdowne. He replied that it was impossible for him to allow her to take refuge in his house, in which, moreover, she would still be within reach of the law. To Sir Edward Carson, Mrs. Drummond wrote:

The Government are trying to find me and send me to prison for delivering what they say are inciting speeches. You yourself have delivered inciting speeches on the question of Ulster and violent resistance to Home Rule. Yet I notice that the Government do not attack you. I have therefore come, accompanied by friends, to consult with you as to how I, like yourself, may secure immunity from arrest and imprisonment. I shall be glad if you will have me admitted at once, as at any moment I may be arrested on your doorstep. I am sure that you as a militant will have every wish to protect another militant. . . .

Before the magistrate, she and her fellow prisoners read copiously from the speeches of Lord Lansdowne, Sir Edward Carson, and their colleagues. They claimed the same freedom from imprisonment, but they were sentenced and sent to prison. After a hunger-strike of seven days they were released. Though the General was very ill, she gallantly went to the Home Secretary's home and remained on his doorstep. There she was arrested for obstruction. Release was offered to her, until she made it clear that she intended to return to the Home Secretary's house, whereupon she was detained all night. In the morning pleurisy was diagnosed, and so her fight was suspended.

A cheering event was the defeat of the Government in the by-election at Ipswich. A serious case of forcible feeding was occurring in the local gaol, the women who were the victims of this torture being on remand and unconvicted of any offence. The Suffragette campaign in the constituency was highly effectual and the electors of Ipswich censured the Government by defeating their nominee. Mr. Lloyd

George, speaking for the Liberal candidate, described Mrs. Pankhurst and Mr. Bonar Law as the two anarchist leaders in the country, each of them defying all authority and pursuing a lawless policy. But he did not explain why his Government did not treat them in the same way!

Sanctuary was sought with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Davidson, by Annie Kenney, who drove to Lambeth Palace and asked the Archbishop to shelter her from arrest. She obtained entrance, remained there for several hours, until the police arrived, demanded admission, and took her back to prison under the 'Cat and Mouse' Act.

Deputation day arrived. The deputation, including women from all parts of the country, with Mrs. Pankhurst at their head, proceeded to Buckingham Palace to seek an audience of the King. The Government barred their way. The police were there in numbers, reminiscent of, but even stronger than, the guard that had kept such deputations from entering the House of Commons. Many of the women were stopped as far from the Palace as the Wellington Arch, and when they tried to force the gates they were, according to newspaper report, 'shown no mercy'. Mother with some others managed to slip through the gates just as they were slowly closing and so she reached the Palace, only to have her deputation broken up and to be herself arrested and taken direct to Holloway.

In Paris my telephone rang. I listened. A small, far-away, childish voice said: 'We're raided.' It was our youngest office girl.¹ The police in hundreds had swarmed into Lincoln's Inn House, and the small office girl had quietly rung me up to give me the news. Our headquarters were swept clear and the police held possession. Grace Roe was arrested. The Government had made this new, desperate attempt to wreck the W.S.P.U. We were ready for them; the good ship righted herself and sailed on. The Union removed to temporary quarters in Tothill Street, conveniently near Downing Street and the House of Commons! Our paper came out as usual, merely reduced in size for one number—the office routine and all business continued. Grace Roe's successor, long since appointed and ready, entered upon her duties as chief organizer. But this time the Government did not know and possibly never learnt who that successor was. They could not have found her if they had known her. She did not appear in the office; she

¹ Esther Knowles, later my personal private secretary until her retirement in 1959.—Ed.

lived secluded and disguised. But her authority and control, as my representative, were complete.

We took the raid with more than calmness. 'A raid on the W.S.P.U. is becoming an annual event,' we remarked. 'This, like the former raids, is simply an attempt on the part of the Government to gain time and postpone a little longer their inevitable surrender. The spirit of the Union is so strong that no attack upon its body can cause injury.' Annie Kenney and Grace Roe, in turn, had laid such solid foundations, and their successor, the third in the line of the Exile's magnificent agents, was so able for her onerous and perilous task, that the Union and the cause could not be shattered.

An invaluable aid at this critical time was Mrs. Mansel. The Government were so resolved to break the movement that our speakers, who were regularly declaring W.S.P.U. policy at big central meetings in London, were continually liable to arrest. Happily Mrs. Mansel was that *rara avis*, a Suffragette, as completely immune from arrest as Sir Edward Carson and Mr. Bonar Law! She was a cousin of the chief Liberal Whip! The Liberal leaders would not, it seemed, 'Cat and Mouse' their own relations. So much the better, because it meant that Mrs. Mansel could and did preside at the weekly At Homes, and could and did go from London to Paris as the living link between the commander in exile and the chief organizer in London. Hoping that blood would continue to be politically thicker than water, we thankfully profited by Mrs. Mansel's fortunate kinship.

Another raid was surely coming, I thought, and quickly. The Government would not wait another year to strike again. Yet I too believed that the victorious end of our fight was very near. The Bishop of London's speech against forcible feeding and other such utterances had morally defeated the Government and the Cabinet Ministers' election defeat at Ipswich was the writing on the wall. Mother could not be kept much longer under 'Cat and Mouse' coercion, being arrested and re-arrested over and over again: no one's health could stand it and she was not, as were many of her brave fellow sufferers, a young woman. The Government could not face the country at another election on coercion for women, especially since the Ulster gun-running had shown up the flagrant difference between their treatment of women and their treatment of men. If Mother died under their hand, as she would if they maintained their fight against her, it would mean political disaster to the Liberal Party. The King had been brought into

the controversy now. The Government could not go on involving the Throne in their fight against women.

The Liberal Government were at bay. Mother had conquered, surrender was inevitable and it was near—unless at the last hour they could break our will. I believed that they would make one more effort and that soon. Therefore from the moment I heard that distant little voice 'We're raided', I did not again leave my flat but remained indoors continuously.

Mother had been released in a serious condition after a hunger-strike following upon her arrest at the gates of Buckingham Palace. Annie, after her release, had returned to Lambeth Palace and lay on the cobble-stones outside the closed gate until the police removed her.

Now began the Conspiracy Trial of Grace Roe, Nellie Hall, and four others arrested in the raid. The prosecution centred their attention upon the first two who were refused bail, and were, when they took to the hunger-strike, subjected to forcible feeding, even while on remand and unconvicted. 'Unless you have been forcibly fed you can have no idea what the suffering is,' Nellie Hall said to the magistrate, 'and people are supposed to be innocent until they are proved guilty.'

Many others were being tried and imprisoned in London and elsewhere. Repression was more drastic than ever. Those prisoners who were under forcible feeding began to report their suspicion that they were being given sedatives to dull their power of resistance, and medical authorities to whom they appealed sustained their contention, in spite of official denials.

How to stop militancy was now everybody's urgent question; exactly the situation we had hoped for and worked to create!

The Times thundered that something must be done to stop this women's militancy which was 'placing the British people on their trial in the eyes of nations'. Deportation *The Times* rejected as impracticable and futile.

Even making subscribers pay for militant damage to property, were it possible, would not avail because 'the fanaticism of some of the women concerned is above pecuniary considerations'.

The plan of making the Union funds liable to confiscation (if they could have been found) was also deprecated by *The Times*, for it 'would require an Act of Parliament and some rather delicate dis-

criminations'. The 'Cat and Mouse' Act 'made an absurd position' and forcible feeding was 'an odious expedient'. The remedy favoured by *The Times* was this: Let the militant women starve to death in prison! This would obviate all violence and 'is not an attack on their misguided persons, but on the contrary leaves them free to do as they choose'.

The Government knew, if *The Times* did not, that women would choose to die in prison and would even prefer that course to being gradually but inevitably done to death under prolonged 'Cat and Mouse' treatment aggravated in some cases by forcible feeding.

Nevertheless, *The Times* had really signalled the approaching victorious end of our war. It had repudiated the Liberal Government's coercion methods and made them impossible of adoption by the next Conservative Government. *The Times* had also proclaimed to the nation and to the world that the only alternative to votes for women was death for the advocates of votes for women.

Victory was in the air. Meanwhile, there was grave danger to those women who, being prisoners, were suffering the bitterest and most cruel last phase of the Government's resistance to our just demand.

A deputation to the King did enter Buckingham Palace after all and the King heard our petition. The deputation consisted of one girl, Mary Blomfield, daughter of Sir Arthur Blomfield, a friend in his day of King Edward, and grand-daughter of a Bishop of London. As Mary Blomfield, at her presentation at Court, came before the King, she dropped on her knee, with her sister Eleanor standing by her, and in a clear voice claimed votes for women and pleaded: 'Your Majesty, stop forcible feeding.'

A great W.S.P.U. meeting was now planned, at which a large fund was to be raised. The prisoners, already paying so dearly for the vote in suffering, were giving money too, and one 'Cat and Mouse' prisoner promised £500. This meeting and this fund would confirm the statement of the Home Secretary that the numbers and influence of those who approved the militant movement of the W.S.P.U. were so great as to 'make the ordinary administration of the law comparatively impossible'. The large sums announced at the meetings we held in those militant days included both money given since the last meeting and subscriptions especially given for the occasion. The total was impressive to the enemy and eloquent of the strength of our Union. Moreover, money was indeed needed in large amounts to finance a work so

vast and varied, especially in the two final years of strongest militancy. We had very high rent and rates to pay for Lincoln's Inn House, and its upkeep was costly. A weekly paper was another expensive, though necessary, factor in our work, and all the more expensive because of the Government's repeated attacks on it which were costly to frustrate. Printed in Scotland, it was at last secure, but what an extra expense to have the editorial and other work done so far away! We had really five head offices in this latter stage: Lincoln's Inn House, 'Mouse Castle', the Paris stronghold, and the editorial quarters in Edinburgh, besides the unknown quarters in London of the chief organizer. Journeys to and fro between Paris and London were another, though again vitally necessary, expense; several journeys a week were sometimes required. Postage and stationery and miscellaneous printing were a big matter. In the 'Cat and Mouse' time very many escapes had to be arranged, cars having to be hired and driven long distances. A large London hall or theatre was hired once every week, for the At Home, to which admission was without charge. All the same, the campaign could easily have cost far more than it did. Best of all, it was victorious. Subscribers to the W.S.P.U. got their money's worth!

We were all startled by the news that the Coronation Chair had been slightly splintered by an explosion. This was the answer of one militant to the 'odious expedient' of forcible feeding, as applied to her fellow Suffragettes in prison. News of her act reached the House of Commons while the Home Secretary was, as one Parliamentary correspondent said, 'actually defending his policy in relation to the militant Suffragists', and it was regarded in the House as 'an ironic commentary' upon Mr. McKenna's claim that this treatment of the militants was proving 'successful'. The responsibility for this and every other militant act we laid wholly upon the Government.

A long discussion upon the Government's attempted solution of the militant problem occurred in the debate on the Home Office estimates. 'We have to deal with a phenomenon which I believe is absolutely without precedent in our history,' said the Home Secretary. The number of women who sympathized with those who committed militant acts was, said he, 'extremely large', and one of the difficulties of the selection was this warm and widespread sympathy which made it 'comparatively impossible' to suppress militancy by process of law.

The Home Secretary discussed four alternative ways of 'dealing with the Suffragettes' suggested to him in the 'unlimited correspondence' he was receiving. The first was 'let them die', the second was 'deport them', the third was to 'treat them as lunatics', the fourth was to 'give them the franchise'. Mr. McKenna rejected all four. He thought, and so did a medical expert who knew the Suffragettes, that they would be willing to die. His medical adviser's words were read in the House of Commons. 'I am of opinion,' said this doctor, 'and my opinion is borne out by statements of some of the prisoners, that they believe it would help their cause if a Suffragette died in prison.'

'They had indeed proved their readiness to die,' said Mr. McKenna, 'and they would certainly die.' He could not speak in admiration of them, but he admitted their 'courage that stands at nothing'. He could not legally send them out of the country, and if he deported them to the Isle of St. Kilda, unless it were made a prison, 'the wealthy supporters of the militant movement would very quickly fit out a yacht and take them away'. If it were made a prison the women would hunger-and-thirst-strike there as much as in Holloway. To treat them as lunatics would be illegal, for the Suffragettes were not lunatics, and could not be certified as such. 'There remains,' he said, 'the last proposal, that we should give them the vote,' but as Home Secretary he was 'not responsible for the state of the franchise'.

Mr. McKenna then threatened the subscribers to our funds. 'If we can succeed against them,' he said, 'we will spare no pains in regard to the action, and if the action is successful I think we shall see the last of the power of Mrs. Pankhurst and her friends.'

Never could militancy have been conquered by a financial attack. If rich subscribers had been terrorized, as Mr. McKenna proposed and hoped, our women would have sustained one another and would have continued the fight. It did not cost much money to commit a militant deed, it did not cost much money to do a hunger-and-thirst-strike or to be forcibly fed. Money was most useful, and it gave added prestige in the eyes of the world, but it was not of the essence nor the condition of our victory.

Anyhow, Mr. McKenna's threat of financial coercion failed, as did all the other threats and weapons forged against us. When the great meeting came, our subscribers rallied as before. Mrs. D. A. Thomas (later Viscountess Rhondda), the Misses Ellen and Edith Beck, Miss Janie Allen and all the host of wealthy and less wealthy and not wealthy

subscribers, sent in their promises as before, and more than before. 'The power of Mrs. Pankhurst and her friends' proved greater than ever!

'As long as their health will stand it!' We marked the Government's admission regarding forcible feeding, and we pointed out that already seven women had been thus treated before conviction of any offence, and while they were, according to the law of the land, presumed innocent.

We challenged Cabinet Ministers and Members of Parliament to see with their own eyes a case of forcible feeding. 'After they have seen this horror,' we said, 'we shall know whether they are prepared to order its continuance.' No one responded to the challenge.

Two days after her attack of pleurisy Mrs. Drummond was re-arrested and became seriously ill. The women, whose forcible feeding in Ipswich Gaol had been condemned by the voters at the recent by-election, were now removed from Ipswich to Holloway Prison, where their forcible feeding was continued. The Government were still trying desperately to escape that '*fourth alternative*' of giving women the vote.

The Prime Minister was now obliged to receive a Suffrage deputation of East End women, because Sylvia, released from Holloway after a hunger-strike, went to the House of Commons and announced that she would remain outside the House without food unless and until he did so. He agreed to receive the deputation and Sylvia went away. When in due course the working women's deputation told him their need of the vote, Mr. Asquith expressed in affable tone his interest in their words. 'If you are going to give a franchise measure to women,' he said, 'make it a democratic measure.' He further said that he should be very glad to speak to the Home Secretary about the case of Sylvia and Mrs. Walker, her fellow prisoner, and their possible unconditional release from prison and from the operation of the 'Cat and Mouse' Act.

'If us no ifs,' was the W.S.P.U. comment on Mr. Asquith's latest words when we heard the report of them. 'Everybody knows and none better than Mr. Asquith that women are going to get the vote. What women want to hear from Mr. Asquith is not "if" but "when".'

'In the next Parliament' was the answer some were suggesting for our acceptance. It was the old postponing talk. 'We know,' was our

reply, 'that the next Parliament, like tomorrow, never comes.' The next General Election, however, was getting nearer. Votes for women was 'in the swim' as it had never been before. The stronger militancy was making its impression all over the country, and nothing could stop it unless the W.S.P.U. and the Government came to terms. If the Suffragettes could be pacified by a pledge for next Parliament, militancy would cease; the coercion of women would be dropped and public indignation would not recoil upon the Liberal Government. Votes for women would recede into the political backwater and if one post-dated pledge could keep the militants quiet now, other post-dated pledges might be substituted for it later on. Such is party politics and we knew it, so we adhered firmly to the demand for Votes for Women, not next Parliament but in this Parliament.

We actually did get the vote in *that Parliament*—for there was never another General Election in which women did not vote!

A big scared lion chased by a small mouse with its tail up and a label tied on the tip, marked 'Militancy!' That is how an American cartoonist saw the British scene in those days.

'Mrs. Pankhurst will speak,' we announced, 'at the great meeting on 16th July.' The 'Cat and Mouse' system was in full force. Our speakers were being mown down by prosecutions for incitement. Mrs. Mansel's immunity from arrest grew all the more precious. Might the bond of Liberal kinship never break!

Mother, after a time of recuperation and a quiet visit to Paris, returned to London and in a letter to *The Times* stated that she would return to Lincoln's Inn House (now restored to our occupation) and resume her activities in the cause of votes for women. The public gathered, Mother arrived on foot, and was about to enter Lincoln's Inn House when she was arrested.

Mother had calculated that she would, as her strength was so greatly reduced by previous imprisonments, be released after seven days' hunger-strike, and would therefore be free to attend the meeting on 16th July, even though she must be carried to the platform. The Government planned otherwise. They released her after three days' hunger-and-strike-thirst, and on a four-days' licence, making her liable to re-arrest one day before the meeting. A medical report of her condition signed by Dr. Flora Murray reported that 'during three days in prison, Mrs. Pankhurst has lost about a stone in weight. She suffered greatly from nausea and gastric disturbance and was released

in a toxic condition with a high temperature and very intermittent pulse. She is nervously shocked by all she has been through and unable to sleep properly, her rest is disturbed by dreams and neuralgic pains. Her condition of extreme weakness makes those around her very anxious.'

Mother's letter to *The Times* contained passages requiring consideration. She pointed out that the Home Secretary had used his power under the 'Cat and Mouse' Act with the utmost rigour, and, having realized its ineffectiveness as a weapon of coercion, was now forcibly feeding even some of those who were as yet untried and therefore presumably innocent of all offence. 'Among these untried prisoners,' she continued, 'are women charged with the crimes of "incitement" and "conspiracy", which Sir Edward Carson and his associates are openly and avowedly committing daily and for which I was sentenced little more than a year ago to three years' penal servitude. Since my sentence I have been eight times released after hunger-and-thirst strikes, because I was in danger of death. I am now at liberty and could, if I so desired, altogether escape further imprisonment.' Mother, in expressing her resolve to continue her campaign until victory, challenged the Government not only to re-arrest her, but to apply to her the treatment of forcible feeding that was used in the case of her friends. She said: 'The Government must either obtain the consent of women to legislate and to the administration of the laws by giving them the Parliamentary vote, or they must give us death.'

'Negotiation!' was now the lure. 'A negotiation stage must come,' we were assured. 'It has *gone!*' we replied.

Joan of Arc when asked once, in the full tide of her warfare for the liberty of France: 'Will you negotiate with the enemy?' replied: 'Yes—at the point of the sword.' Her spiritual descendants, the Suffragettes, would no more be negotiated into surrender and compromise than would she!

The great meeting, our first since the last raid, now occurred. The Government had been urging owners of public halls throughout the country not to let them to us though, of course, they took no such move to silence the Ulster gun-runners. However, as usual, the Suffragettes won the day and secured the use of the Holland Park Hall with its vast seating capacity. It was crowded to the doors. Mother's presence was hoped for. Her four-days' 'Cat and Mouse' licence expired one day before the meeting. To face the dazzling lights, the great

audience, only five days after her prison suffering would be hard, but she resolved to be there if she could. Detectives besieged the nursing home, there could be no escape for her if she came out, unless the Government should at the last moment forbear and leave her in peace.

Dense crowds filled the street to see Mother leave the house and drive to the meeting. An ambulance slowly pushed its way through, a stretcher was lifted out. In a few moments Mother, lying on the stretcher, was carried out, surrounded by a group of clergymen, and men and women doctors. A witness of the scene wrote: 'Through all Mrs. Pankhurst's self-control there was clearly shown the strain of her past ordeals. Her face appeared dead white against the black dress she wore, her eyes were bright and feverish.' The police seized control of the ambulance and surrounded it, forced back Mother's supporters, forbidding even her nurse to accompany her, and drove her to prison. This was the news received by the waiting thousands of women. Mother, only too surely expecting arrest, had written these words for them: 'The Government have silenced my voice, but there are silences more eloquent than words. I say to you, that we shall win the fight.'

'I have solemn news to give you, although you will know it already when you see me here in the place where our leader should have stood,' said Mrs. Mansel, presiding at the meeting. 'Mrs. Pankhurst has been re-arrested. I believe that there is not a heart in this audience, however new to this movement, that is not stirred at this outrage of arresting, twice within eight days, the great leader and illuminator of women in their fight for emancipation. No greater incitement to militancy has there yet been.'

'Something has been said about our Union being "underground"'. Does this meeting look as though we were underground? We are underground, and overground, and everywhere.'

The resolution expressed indignation at the unequal treatment meted out to militant women on the one hand, and to militant Unionists on the other, and horror at the forcible feeding and other forms of torture which were the Liberal Government's chosen alternative to votes for women, and declared that failing the vote, militant women determined to have if not peace with honour, then war with honour, and to pursue their fight till victory.

Mrs. Tuke had arrived from Paris bringing my messages from exile. Annie Kenney, cleverly disguised, had passed through the police guard and appeared on the platform to the enthusiasm of the audience,

and in the midst of all, another prisoner, Mrs. Dacre Fox, appeared. The greatest of all W.S.P.U. collections was made, amounting to more than £15,000 in gifts and promises. What a magnificent reply to the Government's threats against subscribers!

That night there was a strange sense of significance in the meeting and a feeling of imminent victory. The author, I. A. R. Wylie, herself a Suffragette, wrote: 'I have witnessed the last three W.S.P.U. demonstrations and shared unreservedly the impression of my companions that this last was by far the most brilliant, the most inspired by the consciousness of victory. There seemed to me a new hope and vigour everywhere. The steel had been more finely tempered. . . .'

The Forcible Feeding Protest Committee, formed by medical men, appointed a deputation consisting of Dr. McIntosh, Dr. McLachlan, Dr. Haden Guest, Sir Victor Horsley, Mr. C. Mansell-Moullin, Mr. David Moxon and Dr. Schutze to interview the Home Secretary.

On the point of publicity, the plan for an interview broke down, but the deputation issued a series of statements.

The Government at this point invoked the King's help in the Irish difficulty and asked him to receive the militant men, Mr. Bonar Law, Sir Edward Carson, and Captain Craig, as well as Mr. Redmond and Mr. John Dillon, who had now become responsible for arming and drilling a Volunteer Force which the Lord Chancellor declared to be 'a gross illegality'. Buckingham Palace was the scene of an Irish Conference convened by the King.

Mother had initiated this idea by asking for Royal intervention in the matter of Votes for Women. The Government had thwarted her and had had her and her companions arrested and imprisoned. They then adopted her idea and adapted it to their own purpose. Mother again wrote to the King, setting forth that while her deputation had been denied an audience, men militants, Ulstermen and Irish Nationalists, were being received though their illegal plans and performances were threatening human life. She respectfully pointed out that the suffrage militancy came fully within the scope of the very words which the King had used regarding the Irish situation.

'The trend of events in Ireland has been surely and steadily towards an appeal of force and today the cry of Civil War is on the lips of the most responsible and sober-minded of my people.' Mother added: 'I would call Your Majesty to witness that equally responsible and sober-minded and public-spirited are these women who have resorted to

militant methods, because they have found by experience that all other methods of winning them their just right to vote are ineffectual.'

Mother awaited a return of a little strength before taking the next step. We felt that the King's sympathetic reference to the militancy of men in Ireland should render impossible the repetition of the arrests that occurred when she and her deputation had sought an audience before.

Never again could the Government tell Mrs. Pankhurst that her loyal plea for a personal audience was unreasonable and unconstitutional.

The Conspiracy Trial ended. Grace Roe and Nellie Hall were each sentenced to three months' imprisonment. They had already been many weeks in prison under forcible feeding, each week equal, in Mr. McKenna's reckoning, to two or three months' ordinary imprisonment! 'You stand convicted as felons,' was the judge's word to them. That was the bitter thing, to be felons when they sought political freedom. Others, no less felons, women said, were invited, because of their very felony, to the King's palace while these two girls were sent to prison.

Grace Roe had called Mary Richardson from prison as a witness. 'I want to know why Mary Richardson cries out so, when she is forcibly fed,' she asked, and this drew from the witness the account of her sufferings. Nellie Hall, in addressing the jury, moved near to them so that her weakened voice could be heard: 'I will use the description of Mary Richardson, for it fits my case as well. Wardresses and doctors go from cell to cell and the cries and moans of our friends come to us. It is almost worse than the feeding itself; you cannot imagine the utter hopelessness of waiting in the tiny cell and when at last the little army stops at my door, the horrible feeling that goes through me at the sound of the key in the lock. It is enough to ruin the nerves of the strongest of us.' Then she described the pain and the choking and the vomiting. 'All this pain is inflicted upon us,' she said, 'because we want the power to help to make the world a better place to live in.'

The judge in summing up commented on Miss Hall's undoubted ability and the extraordinary astuteness of her cross-examination. Grace Roe, in defending herself, said: 'Do you realize what you are doing? You can't stop militancy by these trials and by torturing women. Every one of you jurymen is an elector. Are you going to let this go on?'

Grace and her fellow prisoner were taken back to prison and their suffering, consoled only by the knowledge that militancy was going forward, carrying the cause to certain and speedy victory.

Suffragette activity was at its greatest height. In the prisons, in the Courts, heroic women were fighting; militants roved the country supplying the Government with the *force majeure*, and more serious militancy which Cabinet Ministers had challenged them to supply. Meetings, theatres, restaurants were the scene of numberless protests. The archbishops, bishops, and all clergy were interviewed, as were Members of Parliament on every possible occasion. Public meetings were held on a large scale. A far-flung and intense propaganda of word and deed was daily and hourly increasing. Suffragettes were everywhere, in everything, constantly surpassing themselves in service and sacrifice.

The Government still braved it out; but a fatal day of political reckoning was awaiting them, if they delayed justice so long, at the General Election. After nearly nine years of unceasing and increasing militancy the women were winning. They knew no fear and the Government were getting very much afraid—of the loss of votes at the election and still more afraid of the women themselves.

‘The worst fight on record since the movement began is now raging in Holloway,’ wrote Mary Richardson, when she was released after a long spell of forcible feeding to be operated on for appendicitis. She had been in the next cell to Grace Roe and knew what she and her fellow prisoners had suffered. It was true. The war between the Government and women had come to the climax—there had begun the ‘last half-hour’ that decides the victory in every war!

Then, suddenly, the other war broke out!

The Years of Women's Armistice

*The Nation at War—The W.S.P.U. supports the Government—
Votes for women at last!*

IN PARIS the march of an advancing army caused the ground already, as it were, to shake.

I was alone, having sent my secretary to London with copy for the paper and other messages. Mother was to cross from England to St. Malo, where I was to join her. Paris was empty of everyone I knew, shuttered and dust-sheeted for the summer and left to the *concierges* and tourists. I could share my thoughts with no one, beyond speaking a word of sympathy with my maid and the tradespeople.

Dwelling there for over two years, indebted to my refuge there for the survival of our W.S.P.U., I felt for France a personal concern, almost as for my own country.

As yet Great Britain was not involved, but was not likely to be immune.

How would our fight for votes be affected?

I telephoned to London to report my departure for Brittany to meet Mother—probably among the last unofficial calls put through to England before they were suspended for the war. Papers collected, suitcases packed, I left my apartment and went into the outer world for the first time since the raid two months before. I could dare now to end my vigil and self-imprisonment, for surely the Government would be too much occupied with the war crisis to raid the Women's Social and Political Union in London!

During all the long, delayed journey, I was trying to see into the heart and centre of this great war storm and what, in this time of supreme peril for our country, it was right for us to do. How could we best conserve the interests of women and votes for women? The fruits of nearly nine years of immense effort, with all the sacrifice and suffer-

ing of our Suffragettes, must not be lost. This was a double blow to us, for when it came we were just on the point of Votes for Women victory.

Mother arrived. She had been through much since we last met and now, instead of the rest she needed, there was a world crisis to face and a grave decision to be made.

War was the only course for our own country to take. This was national militancy. As Suffragettes we could not be pacifists at any price.

Mother and I declared support of our country. We declared an armistice with the Government and suspended militancy for the duration of the war. We offered our service to the country and called upon all our members to do likewise.

The cause of Votes for Women would be safe, provided our country and its constitution were preserved, for on the restoration of peace we should, if necessary, resume the pre-war campaign. To win votes for women a national victory was needed for, as Mother said, 'What would be the good of a vote without a country to vote in!'

Astonishment was felt in some quarters at our wartime truce to militancy. How, it was asked, could we support a Government that had been torturing women and had opposed the women's cause!

The answer was that the country was our country. It belonged to us and not to the Government, and we had the right and privilege, as well as the duty, to serve and defend it.

Mrs. Pankhurst's greatness was never more evident than in her instant grasp of the war issue, and the quickness of decision and strength of action with which, ill as she was, and after the strain of nine years' concentration upon one absorbing cause, she announced and pursued her policy. The truce she declared for the duration of the war had undoubtedly a decisive influence in securing peace at home during war abroad. If the Suffragettes had continued their pre-war campaign during the war, others with a grievance might have followed suit!

The news of Mrs. Pankhurst's armistice went far beyond her own country and especially to America, where she was known and loved by vast numbers. On the outbreak of war, I should have liked her to revisit America. The voyage would have rested her and she was not yet really equal, after her prison experience, to face the possible rigours of war. She, whom the Government imprisoned in her campaign for justice would now have returned to America to tell the American

people that her country and its Government were fighting in a just cause. It would have been a great gesture. Yet she was urgently needed also at home. She began work here and her wartime visit to the United States and Canada was deferred.

Mother seemed for the time to dismiss her ill-health in her ardour for the national cause. She spoke to Service men on the war front and to Service women on the home front. She called for wartime military conscription for men, believing that this was democratic and equitable, and that it would enable a more ordered and effective use of the nation's man-power. She declared that the military situation imperatively required the admission of women to munition factories and to many other unaccustomed forms of employment, to liberate men for the Front. She believed that a speedy increase of national effort in which men and women shared would shorten the war, reduce its cost in life and make victory more sure.

Anticipating shortage due to war conditions, she early called for the rationing of food supplies and claimed that, since we were engaged in the greatest of wars, the nation should be at once put in all respects on a war footing. Our way in the Suffragette time had been to anticipate and prepare for the biggest and worst difficulties, so that we might be equal to them if they came, and relieved if they did not come.

Strong national leadership and unity of military command we urged, on the strength of our experience in the Suffrage campaign.

We were constantly mindful of votes for women and watchful in case the war should end leaving a Suffrage agitation still necessary.

A Paris stronghold was re-established which was useful in the meantime as a point of observation and information.

Mrs. Pankhurst's campaign to open the door for women's war service was highly effectual. The munitions shortage and the need of man-power at the Front moved Mr. Lloyd George, as Minister of Munitions, to seek woman-power for the factories.¹ Opposition from various sections of men, political and industrial, blocked the war. He therefore turned to Mrs. Pankhurst as the pioneer in women's new and larger war service, and as the leader and inspirer of women claiming to help in the emergency. One day Mr. Lloyd George sent an emissary to her, Sir James Murray, M.P., a friend of his and a friend of the W.S.P.U. Mr. Lloyd George wanted to see Mrs. Pankhurst, to

¹ The Government had of course, in response to Mrs. Pankhurst's action in suspending militancy, released all the Suffragette prisoners.

ask her help in his difficulty. She hesitated, she felt it hard to go, after all that had passed before the war. But she went. Mr. Lloyd George told her his difficulty—men sacrificed at the Front for want of munitions, women excluded from the munition factories. He asked Mother to hold a great procession of women—‘like those you used to have for the vote’—a procession which would express and prove women’s willingness to enter the munition factories. Mother objected that their willingness, their demand, to do this was already proved. Yes, Mr. Lloyd George knew that, but the procession would create an atmosphere in which the men, who were his real difficulty, would be obliged to give way. Mother assented. The W.S.P.U. would repeat in a wartime procession the triumphs of Suffrage days. She would arrange for Annie Kenney and Grace Roe to discuss practical details with the Minister of Munitions. They did so. He was keen and alive about the whole thing. The procession was to end in a deputation to him as Minister of Munitions, to ask him to open the munition factories to women, which he was more than anxious to do. A very different deputation from the deputations of our Suffragette days!

It was a big undertaking. This procession had to be large and impressive and also very quickly organized, for the need was urgent. A costly task, and we would not ask our devoted subscribers, who had already given so largely to the Suffrage cause, to meet the cost of this. The needed money was supplied¹ and our organizers set to work, printing was put in hand, bands and banners ordered.

Newspaper help was needed for the success of the procession, to tell the women of the invitation to join it. This help was generously given. Lord Northcliffe took a deep interest in the procession. An anti-Suffragist before the war, he had been impressed by Mrs. Pankhurst’s truce to militancy. Early in the war, Annie Kenney and Grace Roe had conferred with him on aspects of war work. He liked the brisk, efficient ways and earnest spirit of the Suffragettes whom he now knew for the first time. It was the end of his opposition to votes for women. He promised his support and that of his newspapers when the time of the votes for women settlement should come.

The women’s munition procession was acclaimed as a triumph by the Press and all who witnessed it. Mrs. Pankhurst and her deputation duly explained to Mr. Lloyd George, with whom stood another Minister, Mr. Winston Churchill, women’s demand to serve the

¹ By the Government.—Ed.

country in the munition factories, and he only too gladly said yes. The needed atmosphere had been created, and the opposition made no sound!

The presence of women in the munition factories, later, prevented the threatened man-power strike, for the women simply announced that they would refuse to hold up the munitions supply and so leave the soldiers defenceless at the Front. They would go on working, even if the men went on strike.

Our Suffragettes were to be found in every kind of war service. The two women doctors, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson and Flora Murray, who had devoted herself to the Suffrage prisoners of war, established a military hospital, first under the French Government in France, until the British Government were ready and anxious to utilize their service in London. Others were serving in Serbia and Roumania, in Italy, with other allied nations.

The militant Suffrage movement had given women new confidence in their capacities, new power to undertake difficult tasks. The Suffragette spirit had become generalized and expressed itself in women's war service. 'I never knew we had such women,' exclaimed a Liberal Cabinet Minister. He ought to have known it, for such women had been battling with him and his Government for women's right to political service.

The action of Mr. Lloyd George in opening the war factories to women, his readiness to turn for help in the national emergency to Mrs. Pankhurst and the Suffragettes, showed us that he was in earnest in the country's cause. When he became Prime Minister we supported him as the national leader. We had confidence in his will to win. Without in the least forgetting the possibility of an eventual resumption of the Suffrage fight, we gave his Government our loyal support for the duration of the war. We increasingly believed, however, that the political opposition to votes for women was at an end and that the Suffragette armistice would end not in the resumption of the former hostilities but in the enfranchisement of women.

Two foreign missions were undertaken by Mrs. Pankhurst during the war—self-chosen, not official missions. Her sympathy for the smaller nations, whether Belgium in the west or Serbia in the east, was strong, and she went to the United States to raise funds for Serbian relief.

Russia she visited after the Revolution, during the régime of

Kerensky, with whom she had an interview. Her stay in Petrograd and Moscow and her conversations with many interesting personalities gave her a full harvest of information and impressions.

On her return to London she saw the Prime Minister and predicted to him the early end of Kerensky's rule and the succession of the present régime. Her first and only visit there had shown her the end of the old and the beginning of the new Russia.

Votes for women came in wartime. War conditions had shattered the electoral register and Parliament must attend to the franchise before it could be re-elected. The franchise could not be touched without giving votes to women, because Mrs. Pankhurst and her Suffragettes would resume militancy as soon as the war was ended, and no Government could arrest and imprison women who, in the country's danger, had set aside their campaign to help the national cause. The 'Cat and Mouse' Act could never be used again; forcible feeding was ended. The men voters would not have tolerated any more coercion of the women who had shown themselves as true to their country as to their own cause. Indeed, if the men voters had tolerated it, the women themselves would not. The resumption of militancy would have found thousands of new recruits joining the militant ranks and even before the war women had proved their power, by their own unaided exertions, to place any Government that resisted their just claim in an impossible position.

Mrs. Pankhurst at the onset of the war had written: 'In the black hour that has just struck in Europe, the men are turning to their women and calling on them to take up the work of keeping civilization alive. In all the harvest fields and orchards women are garnering food, for the men who fight as well as for the children left fatherless by the war. In the cities, the women are keeping open the shops, driving trucks and trains and attending to a multitude of business.' When the war ended would men, she asked, forget the part that women had taken, as they had forgotten it after previous wars? For the present, the struggle for the vote was in abeyance, but it was not abandoned. 'But one thing is reasonably certain,' she wrote; 'the Cabinet changes which will necessarily result from warfare will make future militancy on the part of women unnecessary. No future Government will undertake the impossible task of crushing or even delaying

the march of women towards their rightful heritage of political liberty.'

Cabinet changes did in fact occur in wartime, as Mother anticipated, and they eased the situation. Mr. Lloyd George, the Prime Minister, and Mr. Bonar Law, his partner in control of national affairs, were both avowed supporters of the principle of women's enfranchisement and in that sense had nothing to retract. Mr. Lloyd George, who in the pre-war days had resisted the smaller measure of votes which would then have given us a political foothold and opened the door for more, now had the power to give us the larger measure which had been unobtainable in the former political conditions. It was now his turn to advise against wider and still, said he, impracticable demands. An echo of past history sounded in Mr. Lloyd George's assurance that woman suffrage would appear in the Franchise Bill as first introduced and not be left to be added by amendment. Mrs. Pankhurst held rather aloof from the negotiations that attended the Speaker's Conference of members of all parties to consider franchise reform generally and woman suffrage in particular. She and I believed that a certain detachment on our part would give more effect to the potential, post-war militancy which it was the aim of political leaders to avert. We therefore left it to others to discuss such points as the differential age limit for women voters, designed to prevent them from becoming at once an electoral majority.

Mother did, however, join the deputation of women's societies to the Prime Minister on 17th March and thanked him in the name of the Women's Social and Political Union for having made it possible for the question of woman suffrage to be dealt with in a practical way. 'I want to assure you,' she said, 'that whatever you think can be passed, with the least discussion and debate, we are ready to accept.' Mr. Lloyd George explained that he had that morning had a draft Bill prepared so that there would be no loss of time in that respect. 'The attitude of the Government with regard to woman suffrage,' he said, 'will be this: that they leave the question of votes for women as an open question. As far as the Government are concerned the majority will vote for the retention of the Women's Suffrage in the Measure.

'We take the responsibility of conducting the Bill through the House of Commons, but the Measure itself is a House of Commons Measure, which every section of the Commons is equally responsible for. It is not quite in the same category as an ordinary Government

Bill. That is the attitude we have taken up, because we feel it essential that it should be regarded very largely as an agreed Measure between all sections of the House.'

In due course Parliament passed the Measure, with votes for women included. Opposition had vanished. Mr. Asquith declared himself a convert, with admission of past blindness like that wherewith Stesichorus was smitten for insulting Helen of Troy. In the House of Lords former opponents also supported the Measure. The Royal assent was given.

The fifty years' story, with its militant last chapter, had a happy ending. The vision of the pioneers, the persistence of those who followed them during the long middle period, the sacrifice of the militants, had been rewarded. Women at last were citizens and voters.

Seats in Parliament had been thrown in for good measure when the vote was granted to women. Little time remained before the ensuing General Election in which women could find and win a constituency. No woman sat at first in the new Parliament. Some had made the eleventh-hour attempt, including myself. We felt that if a woman were elected to Parliament the opinion of women who had served in war-time might be better heard at the Peace Conference. However, the conditions were too adverse at that early stage. Later the first woman, Lady Astor,¹ was elected to the House of Commons. Many others have been elected since and their number will grow. The presence of women in the House of Commons signalizes the great change that has taken place in the position of women.

We had pictured national rejoicing, a great public celebration of our Votes for Women victory. It had come in time of public mourning and deepening war danger. Our only celebration of women's enfranchisement was a greater devotion to war service in defence of the country in which we now were citizens and in defence of the national and constitutional liberties in which women now had obtained their part.

¹ Lady Astor was the first woman to take her seat as M.P. Countess Markievicz had been returned at the previous General Election but as a Sinn Féiner had refused to come to Westminster.—Ed.

Mrs. Pankhurst's Last Years

THE World War was over. The peace was signed. The women's war was over. The vote was won. A chapter of world history had closed. A new chapter was opening.

Mrs. Pankhurst had finished the task to which she had set her hand. Women were politically free. She had done her part during the war and its aftermath. She stood now at a dividing point of past and future. A vital decision had to be made. Should the movement and organization she had founded and led for so many years be kept in being? The loyal and courageous women who had shared her hard campaign had done so for an object that was now achieved. Unbreakable bonds of memory, and thankfulness for victory, united the Suffragettes one to another and to their leader. But new issues arising would not find them all necessarily of the same opinion.

Since militancy began, Mother and I had never left the captain's bridge. The burdens of responsibility had been manifold. While the vote was at stake and war service needed, we had faced and dared the responsibility, but was it wise to do so after the vote was gained and the war emergency over? We decided not.

Even on a reduced scale the maintenance and leadership of a movement which could effectually influence national policy in the time to come, as the W.S.P.U. had influenced it in the past, must require some thousands of pounds annually. The unblinking political vigilance and continuous striving of many years had brought their result. A great reform had been accomplished.

The organization was dissolved, leaving only its record of perfect victory. We were glad to be able to settle its outstanding liabilities.

Mother decided that she would go to the United States and Canada for a longer tour than she had been able to make in the past. This time

there would be no need for her to come back after a few weeks to lead a Suffrage deputation and go to prison. Mother had much to contribute in the after-war era. She would surely return to the political sphere with the fruits of her observation of conditions in the New World. Her long and varied political experience, her influence with women and her understanding of their needs made her an authority on home affairs. Her touch with the Continent, her friendship with the American people and her intimate knowledge of Canada would give her insight into Imperial and foreign affairs.

Her absence was prolonged beyond expectation. Then she began to write of staying in Canada indefinitely. In the changed conditions of the time her plans had to be changed. Naturally, also, there was in Canada a strong desire to keep Mrs. Pankhurst and to call for her counsel and service. The Canadian Social Hygiene Council, centred in Toronto, asked and won her co-operation. She had no official connection with the Government of the Dominion. But Mother loved Canada and Canada loved her. She seemed to know every corner of the Dominion and everywhere had friends. Miss Pine, her nurse and friend in the days of the 'Cat and Mouse' ordeal, had crossed the Atlantic with her and spent several years there—an exile for love's sake, as I used to call her, for she longed for home—watching over Mother's health and helping her in every way. I eventually followed, going first to the United States and then to Canada. There I joined Mother; we had a quiet home and were happy in Toronto, city of churches, trees, and kind hearts.

For all her activities and her interest in Canadian affairs Mother missed her legions, the women whose love and loyalty had heartened her through the Suffragette years, as they missed her presence and the great and inspiring days that had ended. She was glad of a gift made to us as a reminder of the unbroken bond forged in the past. She was not one to live in the past, however. The present, with its claims, the future, with its tasks not yet begun, were her concern and in this she showed her managing spirit. She could not rest upon her laurels, re-fight old battles, dwell upon past victory. Her look was ever forward. . . .

Mother was looking very tired and worn. A prospect of meetings in the Maritime Provinces, in far from warm weather, was before her. I feared one of the chills which, so rare with her, seemed, when they came, to affect her the more. Complete rest, change, warmth, were what she needed.

At Toronto's famous annual exhibition, she had noticed, once, the Bermuda exhibit and had fallen in love with the place as thus presented. To Bermuda she went. She spent a year there. It appealed to her as had Victoria in the far West. The beauty, warmth and peace were good for her; she made many friends.

She did not return to Canada. Bermuda was a step on the way home. . . . She had left England for six months and returned after as many years.

She joined her sister Ada in London and considered political conditions. Changes were many. A new generation of women had grown up since the vote was won.

Mother recognized that the interplay of political forces was tending to an enlargement of the women's vote and that the limitation imposed ten years ago would soon be removed. The door of citizenship being already open to women, it would open wider still.

Mrs. Pankhurst's concern, on re-entering politics in the Mother Country, was mainly with the constructive use of the vote. To strengthen the British Empire and draw closer together its lands and peoples was a cause especially dear to her.

After deep thought she decided to identify herself with the Conservative Party, perhaps because she felt that if construction could be duly combined with conservation, this would most nearly meet the national need. She became a Parliamentary candidate for Whitechapel. She might well have been elected to Parliament by acclamation and agreement between voters of all parties and no party, as a sign of political reconciliation between men and women, between the post-war and pre-war eras. She would have left in Parliament a mark of value for all time.

Having chosen the political course she judged right, she devoted herself to her new task with all her strength. In many parts of the country, as well as in her own constituency, she spoke with the power that had stirred people in the great days of the Votes for Women campaign.

The Government now resolved to remove the remaining restraints upon women's enfranchisement and a Bill for this purpose was introduced.

At a meeting in the Albert Hall, Mother moved the vote of thanks to Mr. Baldwin, then Prime Minister, in a speech which charmed and electrified thousands who, many of them, had never before seen or

heard the Mrs. Pankhurst of whom they had read in the days of the militant campaign. They marvelled to find what manner of woman she was, who had toiled so long, fought so hard, suffered so much for Votes for Women which a Conservative Prime Minister was now giving in full measure. When they saw and heard her, and knew her for what she was, they felt the pity of the long misunderstanding of her and the loss, through so many years, of the stateswoman's power which should have been used for great national ends. They acclaimed her that night as a great citizen.

Determined to make the best fight she could to win Whitechapel, Mother decided to take rooms there and spend a few days in each week working among the people.

She longed to change the conditions of poverty existing for so many, and the people would have found in her a faithful representative, who would have brought her woman's point of view to bear on their problems.

Present effort and all the long struggle of the past seemed all at once to overwhelm her. She took to her bed. She would rest and be medically overhauled—she was going to be 'better than she had been for years'.

But instead of being better she appeared to get worse. It was an illness. She was moved, by medical advice, to a nursing home. She spoke much of 'your father and Harry'—her 'greatest griefs', she said, and she had never recovered from them. She had always been silent about things too deep for words, but she spoke more of them now than she had ever done. She said only good and peaceful things about persons and happenings. She was showing how completely free she was from bitterness, after the struggle of the past, how serenely content with victory. She was expressing again what she had said to us a year before: 'After all, I have had a wonderful life.'

She was very gentle and thoughtful of others. She was a brave patient, ready to try everything advised. But strength was ebbing in the body she had driven so hard in the service of her ideals; her finely harmonized and balanced physical constitution had its limits. It was as though the weakness and illness brought by hunger-and-thirst-strikes had been postponed when war broke out, that she might plunge into war service, and had now come to reckon with her after all those years. Yet she was so vital. I could not think of her dying. Mother would always be in our world, whoever went from it. She looked

better, her colour was fresh and I thought she was going uphill again. 'She will be a great loss,' I heard the doctor say. Then I knew.

The rain fell that night with drenching sound, as though the skies were weeping for her. She was unconscious for hours, just breathing. The Twenty-third Psalm gave, as we read it, its message for her and for us. The rain had ceased. She died as the day came, with her face to the morning sky.

After death, there was joy in her face and she looked as young again as though it were her bridal day. . . .

The House of Lords passed the final measure of Votes for Women in the hour her body, which had suffered so much for that cause, was laid in the grave. She, who had come to them in their need, had stayed with the women as long as they still might need her, and then she went away.

Postscript

BY THE EDITOR

Christabel Pankhurst's text ends as it began—on a personal note. She no doubt felt that with the winning of the vote and the passing of the mother she loved so well the tale she had set out to write had been told. But it was thought that many readers might wish to have in the form of a postscript a brief summary to date of the fruits of the political victory.

As mentioned in Chapter 17, the measure which received the Royal Assent on the 6th of February 1918 did not put women on a footing of full equality with men in the matter of the parliamentary franchise. It limited that right in two ways. First, it did not give the vote to women under thirty years of age. Secondly, only those women over thirty who were either themselves Local Government electors or the wives of men so qualified were placed on the register of parliamentary electors. Roughly it gave the vote to some eight million women as against some thirteen million men. It was admittedly a compromise and it was as such that it was accepted by the women's societies.

At first, very few women secured entry into the House of Commons as provided for in the other Act of 1918. But the number elected has gradually increased and now (May 1959) stands at 28 out of a total number of over 600 M.P.s. A much larger proportion of women are members of Local Authorities, notably of the London County Council.

On the 23rd of December 1919 Royal Assent was given to the Sex Disqualification Removal Act and in consequence women were enabled among other things to take degrees at all the Universities of the U.K., to become solicitors, to be admitted to the Bar examinations and if successful in them to practise as barristers. It was anticipated that the House of Lords would also admit those women who are Peereesses in their own right; but this did not happen and women

remained excluded from the Upper House until the door was opened to Life Peeresses in 1958.

Progressively women secured entry into all grades of the Civil Service; and teaching hospitals admitted women as medical students with the right to become doctors when qualified. Very large numbers have taken advantage of these facilities.

The inclusion of women as electors has had a striking influence on the character of legislation. This is particularly true of matters affecting the health of women and children, with astonishing results in the reduction of infantile and maternal mortality. The marriage laws have also been drastically changed in women's favour.

In 1927 Mr. Baldwin decided to bring in a Bill giving the parliamentary franchise to all women on precisely the same terms as men. This was carried through Parliament without any serious opposition and received the Royal Assent on the 2nd of July 1928.

In 1930 a statue of Mrs. Pankhurst—a speaking likeness—which had been subscribed for by her admirers, was erected in the Victoria Tower Gardens and was unveiled by Mr. Baldwin who expressed his appreciation of her life and work. A few words were added by myself.

Since that time the progress in the status of women has gone forward with increasing speed. When the Second World War struck the country the help of women was eagerly sought after in every field and willingly given. In each of the three defence services women have now an integrated part. The marriage bar to Government service has been removed—equal pay for equal work is, by stages, in course of realization. Very few legal disabilities still remain and, what is at least equally important, the prejudice against the advancement of women's status in public and private life is steadily disappearing.

Nearly all the man-made obstacles have therefore been removed to the equal opportunity for women to devote themselves, if they so desire, to activities outside the home. It remains true, as they themselves recognize, that one of the greatest services that women and only women can render to human society is the bearing and nurture of the coming generation.

The essential thing is that women are free today, as never before in human history, to order their own lives. To what ends? I am the last to minimize what they have already accomplished both for themselves and for their children since power was given to them. I recognize that their influence has tended to humanize national and local institutions.

But is that to be all? Does their responsibility end there? They have demanded and obtained equal sovereignty with men over the whole field of human governance. Have they any new contribution to make to the problems that all down the ages have beset mankind and to those now looming up so threateningly in this second half of the twentieth century?

There are ancient traditions of women's wisdom. Are these just myths of the past? Or have they any counterpart in the modern world of objective fact? No one knows the answer to this question. Only the future will give it, as one by one the scrolls of human destiny are unwound. But all those still living today who paid the price for women's freedom wait and watch anxiously for this answer and pray that it may be one for the healing of mankind.

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